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HAMAS REVIEWING ISRAELI OFFER FOR CEASEFIRE AS ATTACK LOOMS

Hamas did not reveal the Israeli proposal but it was in response to its offer two weeks ago. Egypt is trying to find a solution to the war

EGYPT PLAYING PEACEMAKER ON GAZA

Talks are on over a six-week ceasefire and the release of 40 civilian and sick hostages in exchange for freeing hundreds of Palestinian prisoners in Israeli jails. Hamas' statement came hours after an Egyptian delegation in Israel discussed a 'new vision' for prolonged truce in Gaza. Whether Israel's proposal to Hamas on truce was tied to the Egyptian visit was not clear

AIRSTRIKE KILLS FOUR CHILDREN IN RAFAH

- An Israeli airstrike on Saturday morning hit a house in Rafah killing six persons, including four children. In another airstrike, five persons were killed in the Nuseirat refugee camp in central Gaza overnight
- *BBC* reported that Britain is considering deploying troops to ferry aid from a new port being built by the US in Gaza. No decision has been taken yet | P11

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U.N. STAFFERS IN GAZA ARE BEING PROBED FOR THEIR ROLE IN HAMAS' OCT 7 ATTACK

CHENNAI ▪ MADURAI ▪ VIJAYAWADA ▪ BENGALURU ▪ KOCHI ▪ HYDERABAD ▪ VISAKHAPATNAM ▪ COIMBATORE ▪ KOZHIKODE ▪ THIRUVANANTHAPURAM ▪ BELAGAVI ▪ BHUBANESWAR ▪ SHIVAMOGGA ▪ MANGALURU ▪ TIRUPATI ▪ TIRUCHY ▪ TIRUNELVELI ▪ SAMBALPUR ▪ HUBBALLI ▪ DHARMAPURI ▪ KOTTAYAM ▪ KANNUR ▪ VILLUPURAM ▪ KOLLAM ▪ TADEPALLIGUDEM ▪ NAGAPATTINAM ▪ THRISSUR ▪ KALABURAGI

Centre clears ₹3,498 cr, 20% of drought relief sought by state

K'taka had sent proposal for ₹18,171 cr, to continue legal battle in SC for balance amount

DEVARAJ B HIREHALLI @ Bengaluru

THE Union Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) on Friday sanctioned Rs 3,498 crore to Karnataka under National Disaster Response Fund (NDRF) as relief for the 2023 drought (kharif) against the state's request for Rs 18,171 crore.

Reacting to this, Revenue Minister Krishna Byre Gowda alleged that the Centre continued to do injustice to the state by releasing only 19.25% of the state's claim. "It is because of our legal battle that we managed to get at least this much. If we had not approached the SC, the Centre would not have released even that. The state is facing one of the worst droughts with 223 of the 240 taluks declared drought-hit. But it got less than 20% of the fund sought," he said.

SIDDU FLAYS CENTRE

CM Siddaramaiah has expressed dissatisfaction over the quantum of drought relief announced by the Centre. He said his government had sought Rs 18,172 crore as drought relief. But the Centre has sanctioned only Rs 3,464 crore, which is not even a quarter of the state's request.

K'TAKA BJP THANKS PM

Karnataka BJP leaders have hit out at Congress government for its decision to stage a protest on Sunday and thanked PM Modi for providing funds. BJP leader BY Vijayendra said despite the MCC in place, the Modi government took special permission from the EC to provide assistance.

The ruling Congress in Karnataka and the opposition BJP have made this a major issue in the campaign for Lok Sabha elections. Getting even 19.25% of the total amount requested as drought relief has become a poll plank, while stressing on efforts to get the balance amount at the earliest.

Byre Gowda said the drought relief money will be released directly to the bank accounts of farmers in the next one week as the fund is transferred to the state's account from the Centre. "There is no mention of arrears in the Centre's notification. Thus, the state government's legal battle will continue until the due amount (remaining of the total Rs 18,171 crore requested) is received from the Centre," he said.

He said the Centre is likely to inform the court on Monday about its decision, after discussing with its counsels and CM Siddaramaiah on how to get the balance amount. He said the state government had submitted a memorandum to the Centre for assistance on September 22, 2023, after which a central team toured 13 Karnataka districts between April 4 and 9 and submitted a report to the Union Ministry of Agriculture and Home Affairs within a week. P4

1. A view of the forest fire in Uttarakhand. 2. An IAF helicopter fills water from the Bhimtal lake in Nainital district to douse the fire | EXPRESS

U'KHAND BURNS, AIR FORCE STEPS IN

NARENDRA SETHI @ Dehradun

WITH forest fires engulfing the Nanda range in Nainital district of Uttarakhand, the Centre deployed a Air Force helicopter on Saturday to control the blaze. Parallelly, the state government requested the assistance of the Army.

The IAF's Mi-17 helicopter did 13 sorties, drawing water from the Naini and Bhimtal lakes in a Bambi bucket and emptying it over the flames in the Pines, Bhumiadhar, Jyolikot, Narayan Nagar, Bhawali, Ramgarh and Mukteshwar areas. Fire-fighting operations are expected to continue on Sunday as well.

Nainital Sub-Divisional Magistrate Pramod Kumar said, "The wildfire is spreading uncontrollably from the pine forests to the Lariyakanta forests. Efforts are on with the assistance of an IAF helicopter to extinguish it."

An ITI building was partially burnt in the massive fire in the pine forest near Nainital. The fire also reached dangerously close to the High Court Colony in Nainital but hasn't caused any damage so far. The forest of Ladiyakanta in Nainital was also in flames. The fire brigade barely managed to control it.

Dense smoke enveloped the road from Nainital to Bhawali, disrupting movement of vehicles for hours.

Forest department sources said wildfires are spreading due to limited rainfall.

Nishant Verma, nodal officer of Uttarakhand's forest department for forest fires, said, "As of April 25, the forest department has recorded 146 cases of man-made fires. Of these, 17 individuals have been identified. As for 129 other cases, the perpetrators are unknown."

CM Pushkar Singh Dhami said all efforts are being made to control the fires.

RED AT SEA

Houthis attack oil ship bound for India

YESHI SELI @ New Delhi

YEMEN-based Houthi rebels on early Saturday fired ballistic missiles on an oil tanker travelling through the Red Sea heading towards India from Russia. The United Kingdom Maritime Trade Operations said the Panama-flagged, Seychelles-registered Andromeda Star was attacked twice.

The crew is safe and the vessel is en route to its destination Vadinar port in Gujarat. The incident occurred 14 nautical miles off Al Mukha, Yemen. Houthi spokesman Brig. Gen. Yahya Saree in a pre-recorded statement claimed responsibility for the attack.

The oil tanker originated from Primorsk, Russia.

"The first was an explosion close to the vessel and the second consisted of two missile attacks, which damaged the vessel," according to UKMTO (United Kingdom Maritime Trade Operations).

The US military's Central Command said there was a 'minor damage' to the oil tanker. Last year, Houthis said they will continue to target Israel-bound vessels till it stops its assault on Gaza. Since November, they have launched more than 50 attacks on the ships passing through Red Sea, seized one vessel and sank another one.

In recent times there was a lull in the Houthis attacks on ships. But from Wednesday the attacks restarted. Houthis' successful attacks have been on vessels heading to of other nations than Israel.

EXPRESS READ

Railways plans to roll out Vande Metro

New Delhi: After the success of semi-high speed Vande Bharat trains, the Railways is planning to launch the country's first Vande Metro. Preparations are on to start its trial run from July so that its services can be offered to people soon, an official said.

In just 37km, mood of K'taka voters changes

BOSKY KHANNA @ Bengaluru

THE distance between the constituencies that recorded the highest and lowest voter turnout in Phase-2 LS elections in Karnataka that went to polls on April 26 is just 37 km.

The highest voter turnout in Karnataka was 86.44% recorded at Hoskote in Chikkaballapura LS constituency, while the lowest was seen at Bommanahalli in Bangalore South LS constituency with 47.55%.

The Election Commission of India on Saturday released the final voting percentage of 14 constituencies in south and coastal Karnataka with assembly segment-wise turnout break-up.

Karnataka recorded the final voter turnout of 69.56%. Till 9.45 pm on April 26, according to the office of the Chief Electoral Officer, it was 69.23%. The voter turn out in Karnataka has been higher than the national average of 67.40%.

Psephologists and election officials said the apathy among urban voters, especially in Bengaluru, continues to be the prime reason for poor turnout. An election official said, "We had not expected a drastic rise in voting percentage in Bengaluru. It has always been poor in the state." P4

REPOLLING IN MM HILLS BOOTH ON MONDAY

1. The EC ordered repolling at Indiganatha village in MM Hills even as people fled the village fearing police action for Friday's violence
2. It will be held at the government lower primary school on Monday between 7am and 6pm
3. The villagers had set fire to EVMs and furniture inside the booth and attacked election officials for "forcing" them to vote.

Amid veteran vs fresher fight, all eyes on seer swing bowling

PRAMODKUMAR VAIDYA @ Hubballi

THOUGH a prominent pontiff bowed out of the contest after promising a scintillating match, the Lok Sabha election scene in Dharwad continues to be as intense and exciting.

Influential Lingayat pontiff Dingaleshwar Swamiji had spiced up the polls by announcing his candidature but later opted out. While making his pitch, the Swamiji had sharply attacked sitting MP and Union minister Pralhad Joshi (61), accusing him of dishonouring the Lingayats and victimising its leaders.

With the BJP repeating Joshi from Dharwad, the Congress hopes the Swamiji could be a force multiplier against him.

SHOWTIME FOR GLADIATORS

Atstake in Dharwad is the BJP's prestige as it has held this Lingayat majority constituency for seven consecutive terms. The Congress is trying its best to knock out Joshi. Their straight fight is being closely watched because of Joshi's perceived proximity to the BJP brass.

Instead of fielding a Lingayat against Joshi, the Congress gave the ticket to an AHINDA (a Kannada acronym for minorities, backward classes and Dalits coined by Karnataka's first backward class leader Devraj Urs), which has stood firmly behind Chief Minister Siddaramaiah. The party's nominee, Vinod Asuti (34), who belongs to the Kuruba community and is a debutant in the LS poll.

ILLUSTRATION: MANDAR PARDIKAR

The Congress is playing the youth card against veteran Joshi. Also, district minister Santosh Lad has been campaigning vigorously for Asuti. For his part, Joshi is emphasising on the track record of the NDA government in ushering in development and his performance as a parliamentarian in the last two decades.

As the constituency has eluded the Congress since 1996, its campaign is focused on the wider reach of the five guarantees implemented by the Siddaramaiah government and the other guarantees in the party's manifesto. That apart, the party has been stitching alliances with various social and caste groups to further strengthen its AHINDA plank.

The Congress is missing the services of its strong Lingayat leader Vinay Kulkarni, who was pitted against Joshi in the last two polls. But the Supreme Court barred his entry into the district while granting him bail, since he is an accused in the murder of BJP member Yogishgouda Goudar.

Performance wise, Joshi has done well. But the Congress is aggressively playing the Lingayat card to change the narrative. The BJP enjoys enough support among the Lingayats, but its victory would depend on how things pan out on the polling day.

The shocking murder of Neha Hiremath, the daughter of a Congress corporator is a red hot poll issue. By politicising it as 'love jihad', the BJP is trying to consolidate the Hindu votes. Dharwad goes to polls on May 7 when voters will have to choose between a veteran and a fresher.

City records 38°C, highest this year

BOSKY KHANNA @ Bengaluru

BENGALURU recorded the highest temperature of 38 degrees Celsius, so far this year, on Saturday.The temperatures are on the rise not just in Bengaluru but also in other districts of the state.

According to the India Meteorological Department (IMD), Raichur recorded the highest temperature of 42 degrees Celsius on Saturday.

Bagalkot recorded 41.7 degrees Celsius, Koppal 41.5 and Chikkanahalli 41.4.

The highest temperature Bengaluru recorded was 39.2 degrees Celsius on April 25, 2016.

The temperature recorded on Saturday is the second highest for April, so far. It is also the first time that the city recorded not even 1mm rain for April.

These apart, the IMD has issued a heat wave alert till May 5 for most parts of the state. It has also issued an alert that the maximum temperatures will rise by 2 to 3 degrees Celsius across the state in the next five days. Hot and humid weather conditions will prevail over Bengaluru, Dakshina Kannada, Udupi and Uttara Kannada districts for the next three days. P5

VANUATU DARE TO DREAM

Fantasy cricket: From picking fruits & berries to beating full-member team

KALYANI MANGALE @ Chennai

THE moment Maiyllise Carlot hit the winning runs against Zimbabwe at the Zayed Cricket Stadium in Abu Dhabi, Tim Cutler, the CEO of Cricket Vanuatu, a self-declared bad watcher of the game, felt like he was living in a world of fantasy. After all, the lowest-ranked team amongst those gathered for the Global Qualifiers for the ICC Women's T20 World Cup, had just beaten the full-member nation, on their debut, a week after they successfully conducted a crowd-funding exercise for their playing kits.

What makes their story even more fascinating is that if they were not playing cricket, most of the players would have been picking fruits and berries away in Australia, Vanuatu's neighbouring nation. The players live there nine out of 12 months to earn money, practice after their daily chores and kept the love for the sport burning.

On Thursday, along with Cutler, Vanuatu had one of their biggest supporters in the stands too. Rodney Prestia, CEO of I Comply Horticultural Compliance And Labour Management

— the company that has hired eight players from the squad to work in Australia. The players are currently on leave from their seasonal jobs. Some of them flew directly from Australia and many will go back to their jobs.

"Basically everyone who shone yesterday, works for us," Prestia, who surprised the squad by flying to Abu Dhabi, told this daily. Nasimana Navaika, who took the four wickets, captain Selina Solman, Rachel Andrew, who took two wickets, Vicky Mansale, opening batter, Valenta Langiatu and others, eight of the playing 11 all work for the company. "Australia have a partnership with Vanuatu called a Seasonal Work Program, where workers can go to Australia for seasonal work. They are working in a town called Stanthorpe, three hours from Brisbane. The players have been picking tomatoes, capsicums and strawberries," he said. After work at 4pm, players start their practice on a ground close to their accommodation. Prestia gave credit to the former Vanuatu Prime Minister Ishmael Kalsakau for the programme. "The then PM was a little bit critical for taking all the good sportspersons out of Vanuatu. The government said, we are trying hard to develop players but we lose them to Australia to fruit picking because we can't compete with the salaries on offer. He said we have to try and find a way we can do both. So we started this program with beach volleyball first and then cricket." P13

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ALMANAC TODAY
Sunday: 28.04.2024 • Year: Krodhi • Ayana: Uttharayana
Ritu: Vasantha • Masa: Chaitra • Paksha: Krishna • Tithi: Chathurthi 6.11 am
Nakshatra: Moola 2.35 am • Moon in Makara Rashi • Rahukaala: 04:30 pm to 06:00pm
Gulikakala: 03:00 pm to 04:30 pm • Yamaganda: 12:00 pm to 01:30 pm

WEATHER
MIN 21°C | MAX 38°C
FORECAST Cloudy
Sunrise 06.00 am
Sunset 06.34 pm
Moonrise 10.39 pm
Moonset 09.09 am

02 BENGALURU SUNDAY 28.04.2024 newindianexpress.com

Fraudsters target professionals, students seeking to go abroad

Accused maintain contact with victims to build trust in schemes, lures them for a month

RISHITA KHANNA @Bengaluru

EVERY few days, there is news about a new cyber fraud, where fraudsters target individuals and trick them into parting with their money in unique ways.

The latest fraud lures individuals applying for higher studies, switching to different jobs for better prospects, or planning to settle elsewhere, and traps them by offering to help with their process.

The cyber police investigating ongoing cases have observed a new trend in this scam, where most victims did not lose money overnight. In contrast to other scams,where victims lose large sums in just a few days, the victims here were lured over a month or more to build confidence.

A senior police officer said that in most of these cases, the accused invested time in the fraud. In addition to the technical aspects of cybercrime, social engineering was equally influential. Accused maintained prolonged contact with the victims to build trust in the schemes. "It is noticed that a lot of people aged around 21-25 apply for higher education during March and April. Due to salary increase and job opportunities, many also look to relocate during this time. People looking for such opportunities willingly update their details on multiple online platforms, including job apps," the official added.

"Recently, a man lost over Rs 3 lakh. He had been looking for jobs through various job apps where he had shared his

resume. Many days after he shared his resume, fraudsters sent him an email offering a job. After the candidate agreed, they sent him another e-mail containing forms, all appearing genuine and with legitimate names. Even the link to the form was manipulated to mimic a trusted and well-known job portal," explained the investigating officer.

To build more trust, the fraudsters conducted two rounds of interviews as part of the recruitment process. "Processes, particularly those involving documents required by another country, often incur higher costs, hence people do not hesitate much before making the payment," said the officer. Tactics like delayed email responses and documenting everything via e-mail tends to erase any doubt of a possible fraud in the process, he pointed out.

The fraud came to light when the victim was called to Mumbai to sign his visa application after he paid Rs 3 lakh only to discover that no such company existed at the address provided.

FOR BETTER OPPORTUNITIES

'US top choice of Indian students to study abroad'

PURAN CHOUDHARY @Bengaluru

IN the last few years, and especially post the Covid-19 pandemic, India witnessed a spike in students' interest in pursuing higher education abroad. According to the Bureau of Immigration statistics, 7.65 lakh students went to different countries to pursue their education till October 2023.

The second edition of the Oxford International Student Global Mobility Index (SGMI) recently released a report that stated that a large group of students are keen on seeking higher education in the US.

Among the ones surveyed, 69% of respondents made the US their top choice for overseas education despite high expenses, safety, and security reasons. Other countries such as the UK saw an interest of 54% among Indian students, 43% in Canada, and 27% in Australia.

The US did not score well when compared to the UK on parameters such as college reputation, quality of education, and affordability of fees. Nearly 29% of respondents find that fees in the UK are affordable compared to only 9% for colleges in the US. Also, 30% of students said they would keep safe in the country while only 11% supported the US on this parameter.

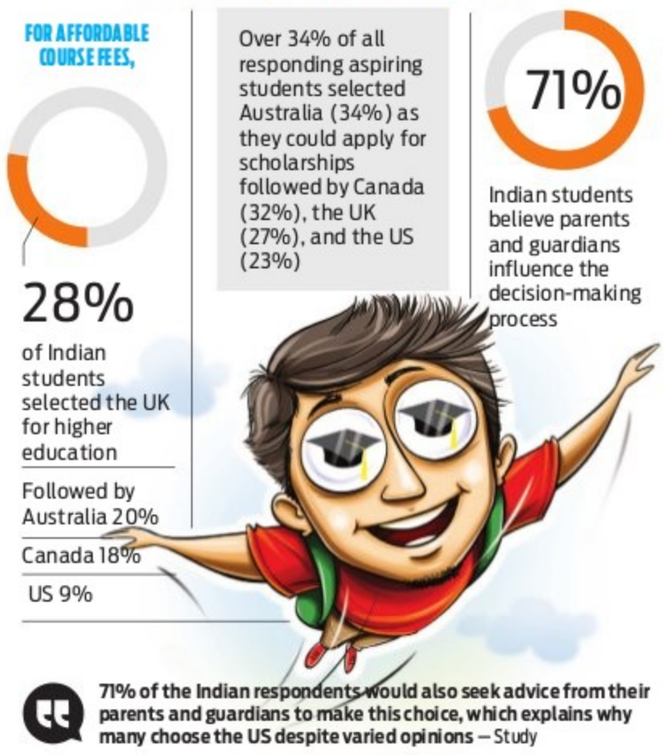
The study was conducted with prospective undergraduate and postgraduate students from India, Nigeria, Pakistan, and Vietnam.

Data showed that many make their decisions based on overall university rankings on websites (51%), university web pages (50%), search engines (49%), and social media sites (42%). However, such was not the case with Indians as they would also trust the higher education agents to make such decisions.

A whopping 71% of the Indian respondents would also seek advice from their parents and guardians to make this choice, which explains why many choose the US despite varied opinions. Some students (44%) would take opinions from their friends on the subject too.

Speaking about the study and its findings, Mohit Gambir, Managing Director, Oxford International Education Services said, "The survey ranked the US as the most preferred study destination followed by the UK as the second most preferred one. It is interesting to note that despite apprehensions surrounding affordability and safety, the allure of quality education and esteemed universities persists as primary drivers."

He added that it is noteworthy to look at how parental influence plays a pivotal role in higher education. "As aspirations intertwine with opportunity, the narrative of global student mobility continues to evolve, reflecting a mosaic of motivations and influencers shaping the educational journey," Gambir added.


FAR SHORES, AHOY!
FOR AFFORDABLE COURSE FEES,
28%
of Indian students selected the UK for higher education
Followed by
Australia 20%
Canada 18%
US 9%
Over 34% of all responding aspiring students selected Australia (34%) as they could apply for scholarships followed by Canada (32%), the UK (27%), and the US (23%)
71%
Indian students believe parents and guardians influence the decision-making process
71% of the Indian respondents would also seek advice from their parents and guardians to make this choice, which explains why many choose the US despite varied opinions — Study

BBMP's promise of desilting lake unfulfilled

MOHAMMED YACOOB @Bengaluru

ACTIVISTS and environmentalists lashed at the Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) Lake division for its hollow promises of desilting Vibhutipura lake, treating sewage and filling up the lake. Lake activists from Tala Cauvery Layout and Basavanagar stated that the BBMP had promised desilting of the Vibhutipura Lake and releasing treated water by March end but nothing has been done so far.

Sathyavani Sridhar an activist said, she and a few other volunteers have been engaging in talks with the BBMP lake department and local engineers to get the lake rejuvenated and fill the lake with treated water, however, their pleas have fallen on deaf ears.

"The 45 acre of lake will help borewell recharge in the surrounding areas, which is why we have been urging officials to desilt, run a Sewage Treatment Plant (STP) and remove encroachments. Despite out efforts, the BBMP is doing nothing about it," said Sathyavani.

Further, she said that owing to lack of rains last year and the BBMP failing to desilt and allow treated water, borewells in the neighbouring areas went dry, causing the death of aquatic life. Reacting to the development, Bhuprada, assistant executive engineer, BBMP Lake Division said that out of 1.5 acre of wetland, half of it was cleared and the remaining will be completed at the earliest.

SPLASH, SPLASH...

With the rising heat in the city, children play in water, relieving themselves from the heat and enjoying their summer holidays

From being milkman to scoring 595 in PU, Bhuvan aims to become CA

PURAN CHOUDHARY @ Bengaluru

HELPING his father supply milk and newspapers early in the morning, travelling for over two hours to college and securing 595 marks in the second pre-university (PU) examination in the commerce stream, 18-year-old Bhuvan M is an inspiration to many youngsters.

Bhuvan told The New Sunday Express that he had earlier secured 593 marks, but he was not convinced with his score as he was confident of being ranked higher. After a revaluation by the Karnataka School Examination and Assessment Board, his score was changed from 593 to 595 out of 600 marks. "I gave two papers for revaluation, Business Studies and Economics, in which I secured one more mark in each, totalling 595," said Bhuvan.

He added that he wants to pursue the Association of Chartered Certified Accountants (ACCA) Global certification from the United Kingdom after completing his Bachelors in Commerce (B.Com).

Bhuvan M with his parents

He recalled that just two days before his exams, he was helping his father Manjunatha DS, who runs a distribution business supplying milk and newspapers to over 300 customers. "I woke up every day around 4.30 am and helped my father with his job until 5.30 am. Then I would rush back home to get ready for college. Since I stay on the outskirts of the city, I used to travel two hours by bus to reach the college by 8.30 am." He would then be fully attentive in classes and work hard on his assignments.

He studied at Dayanand Sagar College of Engineering in Kumaraswamy Layout and commuted for four hours from Chikkabidarakallu. Bhuvan would then go back home and study two hours in the night. "Closer to the exams I studied for longer hours as I was determined to get good scores," he added.

He said the state board syllabus is easy to grasp and with the help of his teachers, he was efficient. Advising others, he said, "Why not see how far you can go." He had scored 98.56% --616 marks out of 625 – in SSLC exams. Kumar H, Director, Dayanand, PU College said Bhuvan was offered a free seat based on his exceptional performance and the college was proud of his efforts.

Experts: Chinese garlic trying to enter Indian market illegally

BOSKY KHANNA @Bengaluru

ALL that does not smell good is not good. Each time you are buying garlic, check the smell. It could be grown in China, which is banned by the Indian government.

The central government proscribed Chinese garlic around 10 years ago to promote Indian garlic, keeping the health benefits of people in mind. But Chinese garlic, which is being mixed with local garlic in some places, is trying to enter the Indian market illegally.

"People must have experienced that garlic purchased from a vendor looked white and big. But when pealed, it had no smell or started to rot quick. This is because it is Chinese garlic. It is found in parts of North East and North India and it is large, while garlic grown in South India is small. Before Chinese garlic grabs a large share in the market, like other Chinese items, it should be stopped," said an expert, not wanting to be named.

He said identifying this illegal garlic is easy as it has no roots. In some cases, this garlic is also washed or bleached with chlorine to make it look whiter. In some cases, it is also found to be treated with methyl bromide to reduce fungal growth.

Deepak J Shah, Secretary, Bengaluru Wholesale Garlic Traders' Association, said they will not allow Chinese garlic and Chinese white onion to enter the market. "It is banned and cannot be sold. It has no health benefits. But if it comes in illegally, then it will be a disaster," he added.

Shah said Chinese garlic has no pungent smell or pungent taste, but only looks better. The present market for Indian garlic is good and the production is high. The wholesale rate per kg of garlic is between Rs 100 and Rs 250.

The absence of pungency means it lacks alkalinity. Normally, garlic helps build immunity. It is a natural antibiotic and has medicinal properties.

Noted food critic Aslam Gafoor said that anything that is banned by the government, be it food items or liquor, it will not be sold or used in any restaurant or hotel, as it could affect their business. But the same cannot be said of street vendors, which is an unorganised sector, which could also have hygiene issues. It is something which the authorities need to look into, he added.

Dr Kerwin Savio Nigli, head, Department of Hotel Management, Christ University, said Chinese garlic is easy to peel. It is even smaller in size and has a very pungent smell. This is seasonal and if Chinese garlic is mixed with it, it can easily be identified, he added.

Project Expo displays science, tech projects

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @Bengaluru

FROM Traffic Management using Internet of Things (IoT) to a scanning machine for Parkinson's disease and brain tumour, about 140 innovative projects based around science and technology were displayed during "Project Expo 2024," organised by MVJ College of Engineering on Saturday.

During the event, Dr S Somanath, Chairman of ISRO said, "Science is not something that can be taught directly but is rather acquired through hands-on processes inherent in experimentation. For example, an engineer should indulge in meticulous planning and diligently work for the execution well in advance for the actual implementation."

The theme of the Expo, "Innovative Engineering Solutions Beyond Boundaries", aimed to provide opportunities for students to unleash their potential in transforming their ideas into innovative projects or prototypes, particularly in current cutting-edge technology domains.

EQUINE LAB, RESEARCH CENTRE TO COME UP IN B'LURU

BOSKY KHANNA @Bengaluru

BENGALURU'S love with animals is not new and the list now includes its passion for horses. To protect the gene pool of equines in South India, especially Karnataka, the first laboratory and research centre for equines will be set up in Bengaluru by April-end.

It will be the first such centre in South India. The National Research Centre on Equines (NRCE) is being set up by equine experts and a team from Indian Council for Agricultural Research (ICAR). Navaneet Raj, proprietor, Equine Breeding Centre said, "The centre and lab will collect and store semen samples. This will help preserve and improve the indigenous gene pool. The lab and centre will not be for racing horses, but for those used for other sports like polo. Many people in Bengaluru and other cities have horses in their farms and other places."

Similar facilities are present in Gujarat, Rajasthan and Maharashtra. There, the state governments have taken the initiative to set up labs. But that is not the case in the South. Raj said he is also talking to concerned agencies in the state government to help set up the centre. An NRCE official said the Glanders disease, a contagion that afflicts horses, was tackled years ago.

THE PROS AND CONS OF ROBOTIC SURGERIES & CONVENTIONAL LAPAROSCOPY

RISHITA KHANNA @Bengaluru

IN THE ever-evolving world of modern medicine, the debate between robotic surgery and conventional laparoscopy captures attention and raises pertinent questions about the future of surgical practices.

While robotic surgery offers benefits such as reduced surgeon fatigue and tremor filtering capabilities, its advantage over conventional laparoscopy in routine procedures like gall bladder surgery remains contentious.

Factors like cost-effectiveness, patient outcomes, and postoperative recovery times play a significant role in determining the suitability of robotic surgery, experts opine.

Dr Ramesh B, Obstetrician, Gynaec Laparosurgeon, IVF, Urogynaecoloy, Fertility, and Endometriosis specialist, Altius Hospital, said, "While robotic surgery has its merits, it does not inherently offer significant advantages over conventional laparoscopy in most cases. While robotic systems may be advantageous in cancer surgeries due to reduced surgeon fatigue and tremor filtering capabilities, patient outcomes are often comparable between the two methods."

He added that one potential benefit of robotic systems is their usefulness in training young doctors and assisting senior surgeons with tremors. However, the time-consuming setup process, high costs, and prolonged recovery times associated with robotic surgery make it less favorable, especially in routine procedures like gallbladder surgery or hysterectomy. Overall, while robotic surgery has its applications, its routine use may not be justified given its drawbacks compared to laparoscopy.

While modern laparoscopic systems like the Rubina 3D system can handle most surgeries, robotic assistance may be needed for longer cancer surgeries, he explained. While there's a common belief that robotic surgery results in less pain, the level of pain experienced depends on factors like anesthesia type and the success of the surgery. Complications such as bleeding, clotting, or infections can also influence pain levels and patient tolerance. Therefore, there's no significant difference in pain and postoperative recovery between robotic and traditional surgeries. Using smaller instruments in laparoscopy, such as a 5mm telescope and 3mm instruments, likely results in even less pain compared to robotic procedures, Dr Ramesh said.

Dr Usha BR, Consultant, OBGYN, Fertility and Laparoscopic surgeon, Fortis Hospital said, "Laparoscopy is favored over open surgery due to its precision and ability to provide a wider view. The robotics system offers specific advantages, including robotic arms with fingers designed to mimic human body parts."

KRRS president Badagalapura Nagendra said the association which had successfully campaigned in South Karnataka to create awareness among the voters regarding the misrule of PM Modi government in the past 10 years and appealing to reject the NDA candidates in the LS polls will be campaigning where election will be held on May 7

Cashier, LIC agent get four-yr jail for transacting in demonetised currency

YATHIRAJU @ Bengaluru

REFUSING to show leniency for the accused, in a case involving the issue of banker's cheques by accepting the demonetised currency, the Special Court for CBI Cases sentenced the head cashier of a nationalised bank and a leading agent of LIC in Hosapete to four years simple imprisonment.

S Gopalakrishna, head cashier of Dam Road Branch of State Bank of Mysore (SBM) in Hosapete and KS Raghavendra, an LIC agent, are the accused. Gopalakrishna allegedly issued 107 banker's cheques of Rs 50,000 each in favour of LIC to Raghavendra, by accepting the demonetised currency of Rs 500 and 1,000 though he was not authorised to do so. Raghavendra submitted the deposit challans in the name of different people.

While sentencing both the accused, Judge HA Mohan directed them to pay a fine of Rs 2.10 lakh and Rs 1.60 lakh each respectively. The court noted that Gopalakrishna had clandestinely received specified bank notes with malafide intentions in furtherance of criminal conspiracy with Raghavendra and made the other officers in the accounts branch prepare and issue 107 banker's cheques. This cannot be simply ignored by the court of law when the Government of India issued a notification for the demonetisation of Rs 500 and Rs 1,000 currency notes with the main object of eradicating black money, with effect from November 9, 2016, the court added.

The court observed that the accused, who were well-educated, should be aware of the conditions imposed in the notification. But, to defeat the purpose of the notification, they tendered the specified bank notes and accordingly, banker's cheques were prepared. At that stage, immediately the bank conducted the enquiry and ordered to withhold the banker's cheques and thereby the bank has been able to prevent the illegal attempts made by accused persons, the court said.

The CBI, Bengaluru, registered the case under the provisions of IPC and the Prevention of Corruption Act after the higher authorities of the bank filed the complaint about the transaction held from November 15 to 18, 2016, in violation of the guidelines issued by the RBI and the notification issued on November 8, 2016.

THIRSTY KYA?

The blazing summer has not spared even the birds of Bengaluru. A Common Myna perches on a water pot for some relief | HRITHIK KIRAN BAGADE

Pomeranian run over by car in city

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Bengaluru

A 10-year-old pomeranian dog was run over by a car driver when it was being walked by the owner in JP Nagar recently.

The accused deliberately crushed the female dog to death by driving on the extreme side of the road, the dog owner stated in the complaint filed at the Puttenahalli police station. The police are searching for the accused.

The incident occurred around 9.15 am on 4th Cross in KR Layout, the pet owner, 49-year-old Shanmugavalli, stated in the complaint.

"The car driver killed our dog intentionally. My wife was walking the dog on the extreme side of the road. The driver drove the car to the side and ran over our pet. It took almost three days for us to come out of the shock. My wife was unable to note down the car's registration number. She called me immediately and rushed from our house to the spot, which is just a few metres away. Our dog died within minutes," the complainant's husband MS Ganesh said.

"We are yet to check the CCTV footage. Going by the complaint, it appears to be a deliberate act. The car is said to be an MUV," said an officer, who is part of the investigation. A case under the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act has been registered against the accused.

Man set on fire at bar, 2 arrested

ENS @ Bengaluru

TWO of the three accused, who set their friend on fire after dousing him with liquor at a bar in Anekal, have been arrested. The victim, identified as K Nagesh, reportedly had an argument with his three friends over a trivial issue while drinking with them at the bar.

In a heated exchange, the accused splashed alcoholic drink that was on the table on Nagesh, and set him on fire with a cigarette. The staff managed to put out the fire, before it engulfed the bar. Meanwhile, Nagesh was rushed to Anekal Government Hospital, from where he was shifted to the Victoria Hospital's burns ward, having sustained over 30 per cent burns. He is under treatment.

Nagesh, a resident of Muthaghatta village in Anekal, is a driver. The incident occurred at Sanjay Bar on Anekal-Hosur Road around 2 pm on April 22. The accused are identified as Mallik, Venkataswamy and Muniraju. While Venkataswamy and Muniraju were arrested on Thursday, Mallik remains at large. All the three accused are residents of Anekal.

Tiger cub rescued, reunited with mother

SUBHASH CHANDRA N S @ Pradhani (Uttara Kannada)

VILLAGERS of Pradhani and the Forest Department in a joint operation rescued a six-month-old tiger cub, which was separated from its mother, recently. In a late night action, the villagers of Pradhani found a tiger cub in their vicinity and informed the forest staff. The staff sprung into action and started searching for the cub.

The tiger cub that was rescued at Pradhani village recently | EXPRESS

"I was passing through Pradhani when I saw a large gathering of villagers. I asked them about it and found that a tiger cub has been moving around the village for the past three days. We jointly began a search operation and found the cub safely holed up in an abandoned house," Rahul Bavaji,a wildlife activist, told.

When the news of the tiger sighting spread across the village, people rushed to the spot and the rescue operation became near impossible. However, the department staff and wildlife activist Rahul and the people managed to prevent the chaos and rescued the feline. "We used a net to catch it and covered an area which it could have possibly escaped. The feline was totally weak, probably without food. I held it by its head and put it into the cage," informed Rahul Bavaji. Vasanth Reddy, Conservator of Forests, Canara Circle, said that the tiger cub has been housed in Dandeli. "We are trying to reunite it with its mother. It has been separated from it for the past three days. We have been able to locate its mother. We will try to reunite it with it on Sunday night and observe it for sometime and if our efforts fail, we will shift it to a zoo," he told.

Man votes just hours before surgery

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Tumakuru

SIXTY-three-year-old Nasir Ali Khan set an example of sorts on Friday, as he exercised his franchise for the Lok Sabha polls just a few hours before undergoing a bypass heart surgery.

Khan visited the polling centre at Bharat Matha School in Gandhinagar here, along with his family members, and cast his vote. Around 1 pm, he was already on the operation table. He underwent Coronary Artery Bypass Graft (CABG) surgery successfully at Kardiac Frontida, at Sri Siddhartha Medical College. Cardiac surgeons Dr Tamim Ahmed and Dr Suresh performed the procedure.

Nasir Ali Khan

Khan is now agile and recuperating, and also has the satisfaction of not missing out on casting his franchise. When Khan braved it to exercise his right to vote, amid the preparations being made for surgery, Dr Tamim gave the go-ahead with some advice.

Khan, who works as a logistics manager at a company in Saudi Arabia, had come to his hometown to undergo the surgery.

"I exercised my right, not for my own sake, but for the 140 crore citizens, who could bring about change in the country. When we vote, we should think about the farmers, labourers, the present and the future generations", he remarked.

EXPRESS READ

Foresters drive tusker back into wild

Mysuru: Forest staff drove a tusker which had entered the human habitat back to the woods at Bandipur Tiger Reserve on Friday.

Mysur DCF K N Basavaraja said the tusker had strayed from Bandipur Tiger Reserve and through Hommaragalli, it had entered the Chikkanahalli Reserve Forest on April 16 and raided the agriculture lands adjacent to the forest during night hours. The staff along with Elephant and Leopard Task Forces launched the operation to drive the tusker back to the forest with the help of camp elephants Jayaprakash and Parthasarathy. The tusker was successfully driven back to forest in the wee hours of Friday. To help the tusker to cross the busy road, the foresters blocked the Mysuru-Manandavadi Highway in the night.

Ambulance crashes into two cars, one bike

Bengaluru: Two cars and a bike have been damaged after the vehicles were hit by a passing ambulance near Hosaguddadahalli in Byatarayanapura traffic police limits on Friday around 10.45 pm. Driver identified as Sumanth has been detained by the traffic police. No fatalities have been reported in the serial collision. The driver of one of the cars and the bike rider sustained minor injuries. A pregnant woman who was in a car has escaped any major injuries. The ambulance was coming from the City Market side. Unable to control the speed, the driver hit the vehicles from behind. Of the two cars, one was parked, the other vehicles were on the move. The injured have been treated as outpatients in a nearby hospital. The ambulance driver told police that he was speeding to shift a patient.

PUBLIC NOTICE

This is to inform the General Public that my Client intends to purchase three residential properties from its respective owners i.e **1) V.S.Kashinath** is the owner of Residential House bearing No.115 (Old No.193/A), PID No.27-12-115, measuring East to West 30 feet, North to South 67 feet totally measuring 2010 sq.feet together with Building measuring 1615 sq.feet of Built Up Area and Bounded on : **East by-** Property No.192, **West by-** Property No.193A (116) belongs to V.S.Srinivas, **North by-** Babburkamme Hostel, **South by-** Common Passage Leading to 6th Cross Road and Property No.114 belongs to V.S.Subramanya Sastry; **2) V.S.Srinivas** is the owner of Out House bearing No.116 (OLD No.193/A) measuring East to West 30 feet, North to South 67 feet totally measuring 2010 sq.feet together with Building Consisting of Ground and First Floor and Bounded on: **East by :** Property No.115 belongs to V.S.Kashinath, **West by :** Property No.194, **North by:** Compound Wall-Babburkamme Hostel, **South by** : Property of Subramanya Shastry and **3) V.S.Subramanya Shastry** is the owner of Property No.114, PID No.27-12-114, measuring East to West 60 feet, North to South 77 feet, totally measuring 4620 sq.feet and bounded on: **East by-**Property No.192 of Siddappa, **West by:** Property No.194 of Vijaya Publicity, **North by:** Property Nos.115 and 116 of V.S.Srinivas and V.S.Kashinath **South by:** 6th Cross of Gandhinagar, all the three properties are situated at 6th Cross Road, Gandhinagar, Bangalore. Hence If any person/s has any kind of charge, lien, adverse claim or objections over the same, they are advised to contact me with all the documentary proof in support of the claim to the below mentioned address within **Fifteen (15) Days** from the date of this publication of notice, otherwise it will be construed that there are no charges or claims of whatsoever nature in respect of the below mentioned Schedule Property and my client will proceed for the purchase of the afore said Property.

I.M. DEVAIAH & ASSOCIATES, Advocates,
No.4, 1st floor, Opp: Seshadripuram Post office, Seshadripuram,
Bangalore-560 020.(M) 9845105603 E-Mail: imdevaiah_advocate@yahoo.co.in
Place: Bangalore Date: 27-04-2024

केनरा बैंक Canara Bank (A Government Of India Undertaking) — Kengeri Satelitte Town Branch, Bengaluru

POSSESSION NOTICE APPENDIX IV under Rule 8 (1) (SECTION 13(4)) (For Immovable Property)

The undersigned being the Authorized Officer of **Canara Bank, Kengeri Satelitte Town Branch, Bengaluru,** under the Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 (Act 54 of 2002) and in exercise of the powers conferred under Section 13 (12) read with Rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules 2002, issued a Demand Notice dated **25.01.2024** calling upon the **Borrowers/ Guarantors/ Mortgagors, 1) Smt. Saroja** W/o Sri. Athmananda. H. A, No.A-A11, BLD Shirekere, KHB Colony, Kengeri, Bengaluru and **2) Sri. Athmananda. H. A** S/o Sri. Andani, No.11, MIGA.146, KHB Colony, Kengeri, Bengaluru South, to repay the amount mentioned in the notice being **Rs.13,70,566.21 Paisa** (Rupees Thirteen Lakhs Seventy Thousand Five Hundred and Sixty Six and Paisa Twenty One Only) as on **25.01.2024** within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notice, together with further interest and incidental expenses and costs.

The Borrowers/Guarantors/Mortgagors having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the Borrowers and the public in general, that the undersigned has taken possession of the property described herein below in exercise of powers conferred on him / her under Section 13 (4) of the said Act, read with Rules 8 & 9 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 on this **23rd April 2024.**

The borrowers attention is invited to provisions of sub Section (8) of Section 13 of the Act, in respect of time available, to redeem the secured assets.

The Borrowers/Guarantors/Mortgagors in particular and the public in general are hereby cautioned not to deal with the property and any dealings with the property will be subject to the charge of **Canara Bank** for an amount of **Rs.13,70,566.21 Paisa** (Rupees Thirteen Lakhs Seventy Thousand Five Hundred and Sixty Six and Paisa Twenty One Only) as on **25.01.2024** together with further interest and incidental expenses and costs.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPERTY : SCHEDULE "A" PROPERTY: All that piece and parcel of the immovable property in the layout formed by the Karnataka Housing Board, situated at Valagerehalli Village, Kengeri Hobli, Bengaluru South Taluk.

SCHEDULE "B" PROPERTY: All that piece and parcel of the Residential Apartment property bearing No.92, New No.12, MIG-A4, on the Ground Floor, Block No.146, BBMP Khatha No.146, House No.12, situated at Valagerehalli Village, Kengeri Hobli, Bengaluru South Taluk.

Date : 23.04.2024 Sd/- Authorised Officer
Place : Bengaluru Canara Bank

STATE BANK OF INDIA
STRESSED ASSETS RECOVERY BRANCH (05173)
No. 11/90, 3rd Floor, Opp. Trustwell Hospital, J. C. Road,
Bengaluru - 560 002. Ph. No: 080-25943678, 25943663,
Fax: 080 2594 3664, E-mail ID: sbi.05173@sbi.co.in

Possession Notice APPENDIX IV (Under Rule 8(1) (For Immovable Property)

Whereas, The undersigned being the authorised officer of State Bank of India under Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 and in exercise of powers conferred under Section 13 (12) read with rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 issued a demand notice dated U/s 13(2) of the said Act calling upon the following borrowers/ mortgagors/ guarantors to repay the loan amount mentioned in their demand notices with further interest + incidental expenses thereon within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notices. The details of the loan accounts of borrowers/mortgagors/guarantors such as name and address of the borrowers/mortgagors/guarantors, date of issue of demand notice, possession taken date, description of secured assets including present loan outstanding etc., are furnished hereunder against the name of each borrowers/mortgagors/guarantors :

Account No: HL-41939385002

1) Name of the Borrowers : 1) Sri. Gouru Sai Krishna S/o. Sri. Gouru Rajanarsu No. 1/196, Krishna Rao Peta, Kareem Nagar, Andra Pradesh-505526 And also at: **i)** Site No.15, Assessment No. 38/1, Mallathahalli Village, Yeshwanthapura Hobli, Bangalore-560056. **ii)** Flat No. 201, Muteena, Building, Deira, Dubai, United Arab. **iii)** Sri. Gouru Sai Krishna Operations Manager Dar Al Fakhamah Electro mechanical Works, L.L.C Office, No. 502, Hissa Building, Al Warqa 1, Dubai, United Arab.

Demand Notice Dated : 30.01.2024 **Possession Taken on : 24.04.2024**

Loan outstanding amount : Rs. 1,77,48,742/- (Rupees One crore seventy seven lakhs forty eight thousand seven hundred and forty two only) as on 21.04.2024 and interest from 22.04.2024 plus expenses thereon.

Description of the Immovable Property : All that piece and parcel of the property bearing Site No.15, Assessment No.38/1 which is situated Mallathahalli Village, Yeshwanthapura Hobli, Bengaluru North Taluk, Presently within the limits of BBMP Ward No.129, Katha No.283/38/1/15 measuring East to West 40 Feet, North to South 60 Feet, totally measuring 2400 Sq.feet and the property standing in the name of "Sri. Gouru Sai Krishna" is and **bounded on : East by :** Property belongs to Sanjeevamma & Veerabhadrappa, **West by :** Road, **North by :** Property belongs to Sanjeevamma & Veerabhadrappa, **South by :** Road.

Sale Deed dated 30.05.2023 is registered in favour of Sri.Gouru Sai Krishna in the office of SRO Sub-Registrar, Bangalore in Book No.1, under Document No. SRI-1-01744-2023-24 and C.D No. SRID1340 dated 30.05.2023.

Account No: HL-41936798170

2) Name of the Borrowers : Smt. Afshan Afreen W/o. Sri. Mohammed Kazam Shareef 84/B, MIGH, Santosh Nagar, Near Indo School, Saidabad, Hyderabad-500059 **And also at : i)** Site No. 16, Assessment No. 38/1, Mallathahalli Village, Yeshwanthapura Hobli, Bangalore-560056. **ii)** Smt. Afshan Afreen, AG Corporate Services Provider, Office No. M01, Building 99, Deira Dubai, PO-251775. **iii)** Zaafranah Building, Al Nahda First Plot No. 73-0, Land DM No-231-126, Flat No-601, Makani No-3510498607, Dubai.

Demand Notice date : 30.01.2024 **Possession Taken on : 24.04.2024**

Loan outstanding amount : Rs. 1,18,01,721/- (Rupees One crore eighteen lakhs one thousand seven hundred and twenty one only) as on 21.04.2024 and interest from 22.04.2024 plus expenses thereon.

Descriptionof the Immovable Property : All that piece and parcel of the property bearing Site No.16, Assessment No.38/1, which is situated at Mallathahalli Village, Yeshwanthapura Hobli, Bengaluru North Taluk, Presently within the limits of BBMP Ward No.129, Katha No.284/38/1/16, measuring East to West 40 Feet, North to South 60 Feet, totally measuring 2400 Sq.feet and **bounded on : East by :** Property belongs to Sanjeevamma & Veerabhadrappa, **West :** Road, **North by :** Road, **South by :** Property belongs to Sanjeevamma & Veerabhadrappa.

Sale Deed dated 24.05.2023 is registered in favour of Smt.Afshan Afreen in the office of SRO Sub-Registrar, Bangalore in Book No.1, under Document No. NGB-1-01481-2023-24 and C.D No. NGBD1462 dated 24.05.2023.

The above named borrower(s)/mortgager(s)/guarantor(s) having failed to repay the entire loan amount as mentioned in their respective demand notices, notice is hereby given to the Borrower/ Mortgagers/guarantors, and the Public in general that, the undersigned has taken possession of the properties described herein above, in exercise of powers conferred on him under Section 13(4) of said Act read with rule 8 of the said rules on the above mentioned dates.

The Borrowers/Mortgagors/Guarantors in particular, and the public in general is hereby cautioned not to deal with aforesaid properties and any dealings with anyone of the said properties will be subject to the charge of the **STATE BANK OF INDIA** for related present loan outstanding amount as mentioned against the respective borrowers/ guarantors/ mortgagers name with further interest accruals thereon.

The Borrowers/Mortgagors attention is invited to provisions of sub-section (8) of section 13 of the Act, in respect of time available, to redeem the secured assets.

Date : 24.04.2024 Sd/- Authorised Officer and Chief Manager
Place : Bangalore. State Bank of India, SARB, Bangalore.

SOUTHERN RAILWAY
(Construction Organisation)
Tender Notice No. TBM-SG-CN-2024-25-01-OT dt 26/04/2024
(TWO PACKET SYSTEM)

For and on behalf of The President of India, The Deputy Chief Signal & Telecommunication Engineer, Construction, Southern Railway, Tambaram invites e-tender for the following works:

Item No.	Name of the work
1.	Alteration to the existing signaling arrangements at Chepauk station (MCPK) for resuming MRTS service and proposed signaling arrangements between Chennai Beach to Chepauk auto section in connection with MSB-MS 4th line work in Chennai division.

Item No.	Cash value in Rs.	Bid Security (EMD) (Rs.)	Last Date and time of submission of e-Tender through IREPS site	Period of Completion in month(s)
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
1.	136451512.33	832300	17.05.2024	Six (6)

Cost of Tender Document (Rs.) NIL

Tenderers can view full details of tender and submit their offer at the e-tender portal **www.ireps.gov.in** of Indian Railways.

The supply/work is subject to GST rules applicable from time to time.

RAMBO CIRCUS
26th APRIL to 28th APRIL 2024 - 1st MAY to 5th MAY 2024
FOR TICKETS SCAN
Daily 3 Shows 1:00pm, 4:00pm & 7:00pm
FOR BOOKINGS CALL 8306430643
:- Online Ticketing :-
book my show
ST.JOHN'S AUDITORIUM
OPP BDA COMPLEX, GATE NO.5, KORAMANGALA
CINE COM ADVERTISING

IDBI BANK CIN:L65190MH2004GOI148838 — Tilakwadi-Belgaum Plot No.16 & 17 R.S.No 197 & 198, CTS No. 910 & 911, RPD Cross, Khanapur Road, Tilakwadi, Belgaum Pin :590006, Karnataka

PUBLIC NOTICE FOR SALE OF IMMOVABLE PROPERTY APPENDIX IV-A (See proviso to Rule 8(6))

E-auction Sale Notice for Sale of Immovable Assets under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 read with proviso to Rule 8(6) of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002. Notice is hereby given to the public in general and in particular to Borrower(s) and Mortgagor(s) that the below described immovable property mortgaged/charged to the Secured Creditor, the physical possession of which has been taken by the Authorised Officer of IDBI Bank Ltd., Secured Creditor, will be sold on "As is where is", "As is what is", and "Whatever there is" on **29th May 2024** for recovery of amount due to IDBI Bank Ltd., Secured Creditor from Borrower Mr. Pradeep Siddoji Murkute & Mrs. Sharda Pradeep Murkute

Date and Time of Auction: 29th May 2024 from 10:00 AM to 12.00 PM

Last date of online submission of Bid: 27th May 2024 before 04:00 PM.

EMD Payment to be made into IDBI A/c No: 55534915010026; IFSC CODE: IBKL0000555 with relevant Bid Documents to reach us on or before **27th May 2024** before **04:00 PM** to IDBI Bank Ltd Branch Tilakwadi, Plot No.16 & 17,R.S.No 197 & 198, CTS No. 910 & 911,RPD Cross, Khanapur Road, Tilakwadi, Belgaum-590006 Karnataka.

Minimum Bid increment: Rs.1,00,000/- (Rupees One Lakh Only).

(1) Name & Address of the Borrowers: Mr. Pradeep Siddoji Murkete and Mrs. Sharda Pradeep Murkute Plot no 24, Shiva Prem, Second cross, Adand nagar,Vadgaon, Belgaum-590005, Karnataka.

Outstanding Amount: Rs.4,09,68,730/- (Rupees Four Crore Nine Lakh Sixty Eight Thousand Seven Hundred Thirty only) as on **10-03-2024** plus Applicable interest and thereon w.e.f. 11-03-2024 plus Incidental Expenses, Charges and costs (less further Payments, if any).

Property details: Commercial Building Floor 1st, 2nd and 3rd constructed on Municipal house No 539, CTS No -1469, Mahatma Pule Galli, Vadagaon, Belgaum, Karnataka and the same is bounded under East- Main Road, West- Property Of Jalgar, North- Sai Plaza Apartment, South- Main Road of M.Phule Galli. Super Builtup Area :-1st flr = 3068 sft, 2nd flr = 3068 sft, 3rd flr = 3068 sft, Carpet Area :- 1st flr = 2454.4 sft, 2nd flr = 2454.4 sft, 3rd flr = 2454.4 sft

Reserve Price (Rs.in lakh) : Rs.413.8/- **EMD (Rs.in lakh): Rs.42/-**

Date and Time of Auction: 29th May 2024 from 10:00 AM to12:00 PM

For detailed terms and conditions of the sale, please refer to the link provided in IDBI Bank Ltd website i.e. **https://www.idbibank.in/e-auction.asp** The auction will be conducted through the Bank's approved service provider **M/s.4 Closure at the web portals (www.foreclosureindia.com & www.bankauctions.in).** E-Auction Tender Document containing online E-Auction bid cum declaration form, Price Confirmation Letter, Detailed Terms and Conditions of online auction sale are available in website **(www.foreclosureindia.com & www.bankauctions.in)** or for any other assistance email to info@bankauctions.in, Contact Branch **0831-2460319,** Branch **email id:ibkl000555@idbi.co.in** Banks Recovery Manager **Amit Kumar Pandey** Contact Numbers:- **+91-7743996197. Email Id: amitpandey@idbi.co.in.** If the bid placed in the last 5 minutes before the closing of E-auction the bidding time will get auto extended by 5 minutes.

The Authorised Officer has absolute right to accept or reject the tender or bid, any or all the offers and has right to cancel or adjourn or postpone the auction without assigning any reason and also to modify any terms and conditions of this sale, without any prior notice.

The borrowers/guarantors/mortgagors are hereby notified to pay the sum as mentioned above along with upto date interest and ancillary expenses before the date of Auction, failing which the property will be auctioned/sold and balance dues, if any, will be recovered with interest and cost.

Place: Belgaum Sd/- Authorised Officer
Date: 28.04.2024 IDBI Bank Limited

QuoteExpress **IT ALWAYS SEEMS IMPOSSIBLE UNTIL IT'S DONE** › NELSON MANDELA

DEEPLY UNHAPPY WITH DROUGHT RELIEF: CM

Says Modi govt has marketed lies; PM trying to harm dignity of Karnataka government by saying irrelevant things

RAMAKRISHNA BADSESHI
@Kalaburagi

CHIEF Minister Siddaramaiah has expressed dissatisfaction over the quantum of drought relief funds announced by the Union Government.

Addressing the media in Kalaburagi on Saturday, the CM said the Karnataka government, in its memorandum submitted to the Centre, had sought Rs 18,172 crore as drought relief compensation as per the guidelines of the NDRF. But the Centre has allocated a mere Rs 3,464 crore to Karnataka, which is not even a quarter of the request submitted by the State Government, Siddaramaiah charged.

"Our writ petition in the Supreme Court asking it to direct the Centre to release drought compensation was heard by the court last Monday. The Advocate General and Solicitor General submitted before the apex court that the Centre will announce the compensation within a week. The case will come up before the Supreme Court this Monday or Tuesday, and at that time we will bring it to the notice of the Supreme Court about the meagre amount announced by the Union Government," the CM said, adding that Karnataka saw crop loss on 48 lakh hectares, and the loss is pegged at Rs 35,000 crore. "But Union Home Minister Amit Shah and Finance Minister Niramala Sitharaman accused the State Government of submitting the memorandum late, which is completely false. Later, the finance minister said that Karnataka did not seek grants for drought relief but for guarantees. Both of them have lied. We haven't asked a single penny for the guarantees," the CM said.

CM Siddaramaiah and RDPR Minister Priyank Kharge address a press conference in Kalaburagi on Saturday | EXPRESS

On the statement of PM Narendra Modi that Karnataka has given reservations to Muslims, the CM said that the former "is very good at telling lies."

"They have marketed lies. He is trying to harm the dignity of the Karnataka government by saying irrelevant things and polarising people, which is unbecoming of the post of the PM. We have complained about this to the Election Commission of India," Siddaramaiah said, adding that such statements by the PM would not affect the Congress' prospects in the Lok Sabha polls "as people are wise enough to understand lies".

When asked if the results of the Lok Sabha polls would be an indicator of the performance of his government, the CM evaded answering directly and said, "The verdict of the people is final. We have to bow before people's verdict." Siddaramaiah said he has reports that the Congress will bag more seats than in the previous election in the 14 seats that went to the polls on Friday.

'No cold war with DKS'

Reacting to Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma's statement of "internal sabotage" in the Karnataka Congress, the CM said that there was no cold war between him and KPCC president and DyCM DK Shivakumar. "He (Sarma) has no knowledge about the Congress and the government in Karnataka. He is neither the PM nor the opposition leader in Karnataka to comment on us. Shivakumar and I share a good relationship," Siddaramaiah said.

Congress to protest over Centre's relief

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

"ON November 13, all recommendations related to the state reached Union Home Minister Amit Shah's office, which did not act," he alleged.

The Congress government has decided to stage a dharna in front of Mahatma Gandhi's statue at Vidhana Soudha on Sunday. "It is because of the wave against the BJP in the LS polls that the Centre has sanctioned funds for drought relief, which is meagre. It is like half a penny's buttermilk for an elephant's stomach ("Aane hottege are kasina majjige" in Kannada)," alleged DCM Shivakumar.

He told reporters that he has postponed his election campaign in North Karnataka and invited party leaders, including legislators, to take part in the dharna against the Centre.

The Karnataka government had moved the Supreme Court alleging that drought relief grants were delayed by the Centre despite efforts by Siddaramaiah who met Shah and Prime Minister Narendra Modi in December 2023, besides submitting memorandums earlier.

After two hearings, the Centre informed the apex court last Monday that it had taken permission from the Election Commission of India (ECI) to take a call on sanctioning funds from NDRF to tackle drought in Karnataka.

Byre Gowda thanked the Supreme Court and clarified that Karnataka was forced to approach the court as the Centre caused a delay in providing funds to tackle drought even seven months after submitting memorandums.

"This is a milestone and a success in our long fight to get justice and relief to the people of Karnataka," he said.

FUND FEUD

Congress govt lost moral right to talk about farmers: BYV

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ Bengaluru

AS the Congress leaders in the state, including Chief Minister Siddaramaiah, prepare to launch yet another round of protest against the Union Government over not adequately providing drought relief to Karnataka, BJP leaders hit out at the Congress government and thanked Prime Minister Narendra Modi for releasing the funds.

BJP state president **BY Vijayendra** said the Modi government has always lived up to its promise and displayed great responsibility towards the benefit of farmers. The BJP leader said despite the Model Code of Conduct being in place and the associated restrictions, the Centre sought special permissions from the Election Commission of India for the priority release of funds, considering the distress of farmers in view of the unprecedented drought.

Hitting out at the state government for criticising the Centre over the delay in releasing drought relief funds, the BJP state president said, "This is a tight slap on the face of the Siddaramaiah Government, which instead of taking immediate relief measures to assuage the distress of the farmers, was merely looking at politicising the issue and scoring brownie points over the pain of our 'Annadattas."

He added that the Congress government that stopped giving Rs 4,000 provided by the previous BJP government in the state, has lost all moral right to talk about farmers and rule the state.

Leader of Opposition in the Assembly R Ashoka said the Centre has released Rs 3,454 crore, and now the state government should give compensation to farmers. He said the state government should not divert the funds and make sure that it reaches farmers directly.

He urged the state government to divulge details on the funds released to the state when the Congress was in power at the Centre.

Meanwhile, Ashoka said that of the 14 seats that went to polls on Friday, the BJP is confident of winning over 12 seats and will also win all 14 seats that go to polls on May 7.

CONG GOVT WILL APPROACH SC AGAIN FOR DROUGHT RELIEF FUNDS: SURJEWALA

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ Davanagere

THE state government will again approach the Supreme Court over the central government releasing Rs 3,452 crore towards drought relief, though the state had sought Rs 18,172 crore, said AICC General Secretary, Karnataka in-charge, **Randeep Singh Surjewala**, here on Saturday.

He said Congress will take up a "Go back Modi" campaign in the state, as the Centre has failed to provide grants to open 223 cattle camps, 713 fodder banks, 180 days of drinking water supply to urban and rural Karnataka people and 90 days of livelihood programmes for farmers of Karnataka.

He said both Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union Home Minister Amit Shah hate Kannadigas and Karnataka farmers as BJP lost the 2023 Assembly polls.

The duo has cheated the people of Karnataka of Rs 14,718 crore and given an empty pot (chombu), he added. They should not come to the state till the last paise is released, he said.

He recalled the entire cabinet meeting Modi and Shah and all Congress MLAs and MLCs protesting at Jantar Mantar in February seeking drought relief funds.

Requesting voters to reject BJP on May 7, when rest of the 14 constituencies in the state go to the polls, he said MLAs, MLCs and party candidates will take the issue to the people's court.

He said the election results will change this time and Congress will win 25 seats, while it had won only one in 2019. On reports about the Phase 2 of elections on Friday, he said the response was overwhelming for Congress.

He also called upon the public to ask Modi, Shah, former CM BS Yediyurappa, state BJP president BY Vijayendra, 28 BJP and JDS MP candidates on the reasons for BJP's vendetta politics and not releasing money to Karnataka.

Modi in D'gere today, as BJP eyes a '2019' repeat

G SUBHASH CHANDRA @ Davanagere

WITH a clear focus to grab as many seats as possible in the third phase of polling to the Lok Sabha on May 7, the BJP is making an all-out effort to attract more voters and ensure that its candidates win with big numbers.

As a part of BJP's programme, Prime Minister **Narendra Modi** will be visiting the region across Sunday and Monday. "On April 28, PM Modi will address four rallies, starting with Belagavi at 10 am, Sirsi in Uttara Kannada at 12 pm, Davanagere at 3 pm, and Ballari at 4 pm. On April 29, he will address a rally in Bagalkot at 11 am," stated former political secretary to the chief minister MP Renukacharya.

The BJP is in alliance with the JDS. The saffron party had swept the 2019 Lok Sabha elections in Karnataka. In fact, it had bagged all 14 seats in the North Karnataka region that are going to polls on May 7. The party wants to retain all these seats this time as well, riding on the Modi factor.

With the Congress gearing up for a tough fight with the BJP, the saffron party wants to consolidate votes in North Karnataka and ensure that all its candidates win the elections handsomely, hence, Modi's visit is crucial.

Renukacharya said the party is expecting a crowd around 3 lakh people and there will be voters from Davanagere and Haveri-Gadag Parliamentary constituencies, who will be present at the venue. Besides, former CM BS Yediyurappa, Haveri-Gadag candidate Basavaraj Bommai, Davanagere candidate Gayathri Siddeshwara, and state BJP president BY Vijayendra will be present. Meanwhile, the Special Protection Group (SPG) conducted a mock drill, from the GMIT helipad to the government high school grounds in the city on Saturday. The entire convoy of the Prime Minister was reframed and the drill was conducted. Though the PM will not be holding any road show, citizens are expected to stand on both sides of the road on which Narendra Modi's convoy will be passing, from the Helipad to the venue. Accordingly, sufficient security is already in place.

PM, NDA leaders should reply to sleaze videos: DKS

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ Bengaluru

BJP and JDS leaders should reply to pen drives containing sleaze videos of an influential Hassan leader being circulated in the district, said DCM president DK Shivakumar here on Saturday.

"Kumaranna (JDS state president HD Kumaraswamy) knows about the pen drive. He showed what he kept in his pocket(sometime back). I didn't know which pen drive it was, or what was in it. Now I wonder what is in it. Kumaraswamy should be asked about this. The media is lying about this issue. It is not that of a leader, but that of the NDA MP from the Hassan Lok Sabha constituency," he said.

"PM Narendra Modi, BJP state president BY Vijayendra, Union Minister of State for Agriculture Shobha Karandlaje, Assembly Opposition Leader R Ashoka, Kumaraswamy and former minister Dr CN Ashwath Narayana -- who spoke about masculinity -- should reply on this issue. I read in the media that they have complained about a smear campaign against them. But the women's commission has seen through this and written to the home minister and chief minister," he said.

He insisted that the media should throw light on the issue. He warned Kumaraswamy against taking up his name. "Let him take my name, then I speak out more on it. Is this how Kumaraswamy is justifying the loss of dignity of those girls (shown in the video)," he said.

On two victims complaining to DGP, he said he has no information on that.

BCs be alert, Modi misleading you, says Siddu

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah addresses a rally, as Congress Lok Sabha candidate Samyuktha Patil looks on, in Rabkavi, Bagalkot district, on Saturday

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ Bagalkot

ACCUSING Prime Minister Narendra Modi of trying to mislead backward class communities in the country, Chief Minister Siddaramaiah said the community should remain vigilant of Modi's propaganda.

"With his false and fictitious agenda, Modi is trying to create a rift between backward classes and Muslims," he said.

At an election rally to campaign for Bagalkot Congress candidate Samyukta Patil at Rabkavi on Saturday, he said that ever since the polling to 102 Lok Sabha constituencies have been completed in the country, Modi is sensing defeat. "This fear is driving him to talk senselessly and issue misleading statements to create rifts between communities," he alleged.

Rubbishing Modi's allegations that Congress, if it comes to power, will take away reservation from backward classes and give it to Muslims, Siddaramaiah said it is a complete lie. "Modi has no knowledge of the Constitution. He should be ashamed of himself for telling a lie blatantly," he retorted.

He charged BJP of opposing the Mandal report and making efforts to mislead the backward class communities that forced some people to commit suicide. "It was one of BJP functionaries Rama Jois who had gone to the court against the reservation to the backward classes. BJP had also opposed the reservation to women in local bodies. BJP is anti-backward, anti-women and anti-minority. It loses no chance to divide people of different communities through its false propaganda," he said.

He accused four-time BJP MP PC Gaddigoudar of insulting the voters of Bagalkot by not raising any issue concerning the state and district in Parliament. "Gaddigoudar said nothing about the drought, floods and development of Bagalkot. He has no right to continue as MP. The people should teach him a fitting lesson," he said.

ELECTION HEAT: NORTH KARNATAKA GEARS UP FOR PHASE-3

BOSKY KHANNA @Bengaluru:

A day after polling ended in the 14 Parliamentary constituencies of South and Coastal Karnataka, the focus of election officials has now shifted to Kittur, Kalyana and Malnad Karnataka regions. On May 7, Chikkodi, Belgaum, Bagalkot, Bijapur, Gulbarga, Raichur, Bidar, Koppal, Haveri, Dharwad, Uttara Kannada, Davanagere and Shimoga will go to polls.

An official from the office of the Chief Electoral Officer, Karnataka, told *TNIE* that the problems are different with the terrain. However, the biggest concern is the summer heat. "While the hot and dry weather conditions of Ballari, Bagalkot and Kalaburagi are worrisome, the terrain of the Ghat regions – Western and Eastern – are to be closely watched," he said.

The poll officials said the North Karnataka regions of Phase-3 also have another concern, because of the border areas. "A total of 172 police border check-posts have been set up, along with 40 managed by the excise department. If need be, more will be created. Karnataka shares borders with Telangana, AP , Goa and Maharashtra in areas falling under Phase-3 elections. Till polling is complete, border areas along Tamil Nadu and Kerala -- falling under Phase-2 -- will not be cleared. In addition, 19 forest check-posts and 15 transport check-posts have been created," the official said.

All 65 companies of security personnel that were on duty for Phase-2 polls, have been shifted to areas that will see polling in Phase-3. Also, since the geographical area is large, over 2 lakh election staffers will be stationed. "We are expecting a marginal rise in voting percentage in Phase-3. The average voting percentage could be around 67-68%. Due to high temperatures, we are expecting that the voter turnout will be more during evening hours after 5 pm, and before 9 am," the official mentioned.

Polling staff unload EVMs at SSMRV College in Jayanagar, Bengaluru, on Saturday

'People in rural areas more keen to cast vote'

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

"PEOPLE in rural areas seem more keen to vote. The attitude and approach is completely different in rural areas when compared to urban areas," he said.

Political analyst, writer and academic Chandan Gowda said political apathy is one of the reasons, but political cynicism also plays a part. A self-satisfied and complacent urban middle-class is cynical as they believe that elections do not make a difference to their lives.

Updating the voters' list to eliminate double voter registrations, removing the deceased voters, among other corrective measures, are urgently needed to get a correct figure of voter turnout, he said.

Another political analyst said it could also be that some have dual voter IDs. They are enrolled in two places, but prefer to vote from their native place. During last assembly elections, one politician enrolled a large number of migrants in the voters' list in Bengaluru aiming at increasing the voter turnout. But it did not happen. The migrants preferred voting at their native places. High voter turnout of 85.26% and 84.96% were also recorded in Kunigal and Magadi assembly constituencies, respectively, both falling under Bangalore Rural LS constituencies. Also poor voter turn out has been recorded in CV Raman Nagar — 48.19% — falling under Bangalore Central LS constituency and Dasarahalli — 48.59% — in Bangalore North LS constituency.

A total of 428 nominations filed by 268 candidates, mostly independents, were rejected during the scrutiny of nomination papers by ROs for the 17 Lok Sabha constituencies in Telangana which will go to polls on May 13.

TN gets ₹276cr, Stalin slams BJP for 'meagre' sum

BJP govt betraying Tamil Nadu, neither providing justice, nor money: Chief Minister

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@Chennai

AFTER much political wrangling and efforts by Tamil Nadu, including filing of a case before the Supreme Court and multiple meetings with the central authorities, the union government has released Rs 276.10 crore to the state as relief for Cyclone Michaung, which affected the northern districts in December 2023, and for flood damage suffered by the southern districts in January this year.

Almost all the non-BJP parties of the state slammed the centre on the "meager" amount. "People are watching every move of the BJP government which is betraying Tamil Nadu by providing neither justice nor money," **Chief Minister MK Stalin** said in a post on social media platform X (formerly Twitter). "The state government had sought Rs. 37,907 crore and had already spent Rs. 2,477 crore on relief measures during the calamities," the CM pointed out in the post.

Commenting on the development, CPM's Madurai Lok Sabha candidate Su Venkatesan said, "What BJP has towards Tamil Nadu is not anger. It is hatred, endless hatred." As per a communication from the Union Ministry of Finance dated April 26, 2024, the funds have been released as per the recommendations of Union Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA). According to the communication, the assistance approved by the MHA was Rs. 682.67 crore.

The "net assistance" to be released was, however, calculated as Rs 276.10 after deducting Rs. 406.57, which the communication said was "the 50% (of the balance) available in the State Disaster Relief Fund account for instant calamity (ies) relief as on 1 April 2023."

Of the Rs 276.10 crore, Rs 115.49 crore has been allocated for Cyclone Michaung relief while Rs 160.61 crore has been allocated for flood relief in the four southern districts.

Other parties, including the AIADMK, too criticised the union government for releasing just Rs 276.10 crore. AIADMK's organising secretary and former minister D Jayakumar said over the past many years, the Tamil Nadu government had requested around Rs 1.50 lakh crore as relief assistance for various natural calamities but the union governments, led by both the Congress and the BJP, have allocated only Rs 7,000 crore. The former minister also said union governments led by national parties are showing partiality in allocating funds to southern states.

Kerala polling put at 71.16%, ripples over delay continue

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ T'Puram

A DAY after Lok Sabha polls, ripples over an extraordinary delay in polling continued on Saturday too. The prolonged polling that lasted till midnight has led to its share of controversies and allegations, while inviting sharp critique from Opposition UDF. Meanwhile the Election Commission on Saturday pegged the polling percentage in the state at 71.16, about 7% less than 2019.The unexpected dip in poll percentage invited sharp responses from both the UDF and the BJP who alleged deliberate delay by polling officials. The low voter turnout in UDF strongholds, especially in Christian and Muslim belts, has led to apprehensions in the Opposition camp.

Noticeably, the highest polling was recorded in the politically-sensitive Vadakara constituency where polling in many stations continued way after the deadline, and concluded only by 11.43 pm. The poll percentage touched 78.08 in Vadakara, followed by constituencies in northern Kerala - Kannur (76.92), Kasaragod (75.94) and Kozhikode (75.42).In Vadakara both the LDF and UDF candidates blamed polling officials for the delay as many voters left without casting their franchise. UDF's Shafi Parambil said he had brought the inordinate delay in polling procedure to the attention of officials on Friday morning itself.

Voters wait in a queue at a polling station to exercise their franchise for the second phase of Lok Sabha elections, in Kozhikode on Friday

However they ignored the alert and no corrective steps were taken.Terming it a grave injustice to voters, Shafi said many complained that they had to wait in queues for hours. Party leaders at the grassroot level have complained that the delay was deliberate and was particularly reported in UDF strongholds.

The UDF is collecting details from booths to find out whether there was a pattern in the delay, he said. "At many places people returned without casting votes. The authorities should have taken steps to avoid such instances. They did not take the complaints seriously though we alerted them in the morning itself. At some places, around 400 people were waiting in the queue at 6 pm when polling time ended. There are complaints that this was a result of apathy by polling officials," he said.

Senior CPM leader and LDF candidate KK Shailaja too said she had raised the issue with polling officials in the morning itself. In some areas, the beep for VVPAT confirmation was delayed by a few seconds, thereby adding to the overall delay. A dispute over open votes too led to interruption in polling at some places, she said. The LDF is collecting details about polling after 6 pm, she added.

"I feel the settings of the voting machine that delayed confirmation of vote was one of the reasons for the delay. At some places the officials waited till the voter left the booth to call the next voter. This was a very unfortunate development which put the voters to hardship. Many people left the booth without casting votes, seeing the long queue," she said.

Modi planning surgical strike on SC/STs: Revanth

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ Hyderabad

TELANGANA Chief Minister **A Revanth Reddy** said that the BJP and Prime Minister is conspiring to surgical strike on SCs, STs and OBCs, by abolishing the reservations. He said that they are taking this election as base to perform the surgical strike. He alleged that the BJP is trying to destroy the social fabric of the country and attacking the sovereignty of the country. He stated that the BJP want o implement the Manuvaada ideology in the county.

On Saturday, speaking to reporters here, he said that BJP is going against to the social fabric of the country. To abolish the reservations in the country, BJP is trying to get 400 seats illegally, he added. He alleged that the BJP and PM Modi is attacking all the constitutional systems. BJP want to amend the constitution for scraping the reservations. He asserted that the reservations in political, employment and education are fundamental right of SCs, and STs.

He alleged that RSS opposed the OBC reservations and overall the RSS is against to reservation policy. RSS policy is to scrap the reservations by 2025. The BJP government which abolished the Triple Talaq, Article 370 and bringing the CAA are all part of the RSS agenda.

He said that Congress leader Rahul Gandhi promised to curb the ceiling on reservations and committed to give reservations and funds as per population to SC, ST and OBCs. He reiterated that Congress party is committed to do caste census, if it comes into the power. He asked the BRS chief KCR to explain why he is not responding on the scrapping of reservations. He demanded the KCR to announce the BRS stand on it. He alleged that for the K Kavitha release from the jail, it seems that KCR is supporting the BJP. Similarly, he asked the state BJP leaders G Kishan Reddy, Eatala Rajender and Bandi Sanjay to respond.

He accused that BJP and BRS are working together. He said: "BRS MLA Ch Malla Reddy said that Malkajgiri BJP candidate Eatala Rajender will win in elections. If BRS and BJP is not in agreement why BRS is not suspending Malla Reddy from the party for talking in favour of BJP."

Responding to PM's comments on inheritance tax and distribution of wealth, Revanth Reddy asked that is it possible to impose the inheritance tax in the country, while Supreme Court is ruled that the Husband has no right on the Wife's wealth.

BIG PROMISE

Jagan: My manifesto has doable things

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ Vijayawada

AP Chief Minister and YSRC party president YS Jagan Mohan Reddy released the party election manifesto-2024 on Saturday and asserted that his party's manifesto is grounded in reality and implementable.

Highlights of the 2024 manifesto include the enhancement of social security pension amount to Rs 3,500, Amma Vodi amount to Rs 17,000, and YSR Rythu Bharosa to Rs 16,000, besides the continuation of all the welfare and development initiatives being implemented till now since 2019.

Addressing mediapersons at the CM's camp office, Jagan said their election manifesto has only practical things that can be doeable. "I don't want to compete with TDP chief N Chandrababu Naidu in spewing lies. I will only make promises that can be kept. In 2019, we promised the Navarathanalu programmes, and 99.4 % of those promises were fulfilled," he explained.

Jagan, who explained what has been implemented in the last 58 months and compared it with the previous TDP alliance manifesto (2014), said facts and figures speak for themselves, as to who was sincere in implementing the promises made. "We've deposited Rs 2.68 lakh crore directly into beneficiaries' accounts through DBT (direct benefit transfer) and Rs 1.78 lakh crore through non-DBT methods.

Cambodia cyber crime racket cracked

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@Rajanna-Sircilla

THE Siricilla police, with the help of the Cambodian police and Indian Embassy, cracked the case of an international cyber crime racket, run in Cambodia, and rescued the Indian victim of the racket. The police has captured a gang of cyber criminals for conning people and forcing them to work for a 'Chinese' call centre in Cambodia.

Addressing the media on Saturday, SP Akhil Mahajan revealed modus operandi of the criminals. "The gang has set up a call-centre to con Indians, in Cambodia, and has illegally recruited around 600 Indians to do their dirty work," he said.

"About four days ago, Atikam Laxmi from Sircilla town complained that her son Shiva Prasad, had gone to Combodia through an agent named Kancharla Sai Prasad after paying Rs 1.40 lakh. There, the company took possession of Shiva's passport and documnets, and forced him to be a part of the cyber fraud. The police used WhatsApp to get in touch with Shiva, who explained the police about the 600 other Indian victims like him, who were forced to be a part of the cyber crime circuit in this call-centre company. These recruits would be given Indian phone numbers and asked to lure innocents into lottery scams, and job scams."

"Shiva's details were sent to Cambodian police through the Indian Embassy. The Cambodian police rescued Shiva Prasad, and arrested Kancharla Sai Prasad of Kodimyala, Jagtial district. Shiva will fly back to India along with other victims," said SP.

At 44.6°C, Bhubaneswar records hottest day ever

ASISH MEHTA @Bhubaneswar

AS the dangerously hot weather tightens its grip over Odisha causing unbearable sufferings to the people, Bhubaneswar recorded this season's highest maximum temperature of 44.6 degree Celsius on Saturday. The state capital sizzled under severe heatwave condition on the day and its maximum temperature was 6.8 degree C above normal.

The citizens woke up amid an uncomfortable weather as the temperature in the city was 33.4 degree C at 8.30 am along with 74 per cent humidity. Later in the day, Bhubaneswar's mercury level jumped significantly as it recorded 41.2 degree C at 11.30 am and reached the peak by 2.30 pm. Blistering heat took a toll on people's lives in most parts of Odisha as 33 places recorded 40 degree C or more.

Of them, mercury level hovered around 43 degree C or above in 14 places. Mayurbhanj, Jajpur and Dhenkanal suffered from severe heatwave, while heatwave prevailed in Jagatsinghpur, Cuttack, Angul, Bhadrak, Kendrapara, Balasore, Nuapada, Nayagarh and Deogarh districts. As per the regional Met office, Angul was hottest in the state at 44.7 degree C (+4.5 degree C) and Baripada 44.2 degree C (+6.7 degree C). Cuttack witnessed severe heatwave like condition as the mercury level soared to 43.4 degree C, which was above normal by 6.3 degree C.

FAN MOMENT

A roadside vendor sells handmade bamboo fans in Vijayawada | PRASANT MADUGULA

'Self-defence' gone wrong, man gets life for killing SI

YATHIRAJU @Bengaluru

NORMALLY, it is police officials who put up the theory of self-defence to protect themselves in cases involving assaults or encounters on criminals. But in this case, a habitual offender tried a similar trick to defend himself in a case involving the brutal murder of police sub-inspector Jagadish of Doddaballapur, but it went against him.

The offender, C J Harish Babu was sentenced to life by Bengaluru Rural Principal District and Sessions Judge ML Raghunath, while also sentencing the other accused Madhu alias Gonne Madhu to seven years of rigorous imprisonment.

Babu murdered Jagadish by stabbing him 4-5 times in the chest, using a dagger-like knife while sitting on his body after pushing him into a drain. He also attacked constable Venkatesh Kumar with a knife when the police chased the two accused on October 16, 2015.

Babu and Madhu had escaped on the constable's bike and went to Mantralaya, where they hid the PSI's pistol in the flush tank of a lodge.

During the trial, Babu admitted that he always had a knife to escape if he was ever caught, as he was a habitual thief. Babu also admitted that he pushed the PSI into the drain and snatched his pistol before stabbing him in self-defence.

Babu in his defence, said that he panicked, and his mind had gone blank, and he was not aware of what he had done as he was afraid that the PSI would have shot him and killed him.

The court said that since the pistol was snatched before stabbing, the possibility of an encounter was destroyed. As Babu did not produce any evidence to show that he was brutally attacked by the PSI. The court interpreted that Babu used his knife to assault the PSI only to escape from being apprehended. It was nothing but an assault to take the PSI's life intentionally, to escape the arrest, the court said.

CPM secretariat to meet tomorrow

K S SREEJITH @T'Puram

THE CPM state secretariat to be held on Monday will discuss the post-poll scenario, the election campaigning and polling in the state. The CPM state leadership has dismissed the analysis based on the differences in the polling percentage as unscientific given the changed political scenario.

Throughout the campaign, the party highlighted the issue of Hindutva agenda put forth by the RSS-BJP, and the Congress' soft Hindutva stand. The issues would definitely reflect in the voting pattern, the party feels. "We were able to poll all our votes," CPM state secretary M V Govindan told TNIE.

"Both our political and organisational votes have been cast. We think the LDF would register a historic win in this parliamentary election," he said. According to CPM's primary analysis, the low polling percentage was recorded in constituencies that are considered pro-UDF traditionally. The leadership also thinks that compared to the last parliament election, the low polling percentage indicates that there was no specific wave in favour of the opposition. However, CPM also believes that in Muslim League strongholds the League's votes had been polled. CPM is also keenly watching the cold response noticed in some areas where the BJP has a considerable vote base.

"It is learned that in Kozhikode RSS activists had asked voters to cast their votes in favour of the UDF candidate," said a leader.

EXPRESS READ

LDF MLA booked for remarks against Rahul

PALAKKAD: LDF MLA P V Anwar has been booked for the penal offence of promoting enmity between different groups due to his remarks that Congress leader Rahul Gandhi was a "fourth-grade citizen" and that his DNA should be examined.Anwar, while addressing an election meeting in Palakkad district of Kerala on April 22, had also said that the Congress leader does not deserve to be called by the surname of Gandhi.

IMD forecasts light rain in parts of K'taka from Apr 30

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

THE IMD has forecast light rain in parts of Bidar, Kalaburagi, Yadgir, Vijayapura, Chikkamagaluru, Kodagu, Mysuru, Belagavi, Bagalkot and Raichur districts from April 30 to May 3, and light rain in parts of Bengaluru on May 2 and 3.The IMD has issued a heat wave warning and alert for Bidar, Gulbarga, Vijayapura, Yadgir, Raichur, Bagalkot, Belagavi, Gadag, Ballari, Vijayanagara, Davanagere, Chitradurga, Tumakuru, Kolar and Chikkaballapura districts from April 27 to May 1.

MAXIMUM TEMPERATURES RECORDED ON APRIL 27 (IN CELSIUS)

LOCATION	MAX	NORMAL
Honnavar	34.3	33
Karwar	37.2	34
Mangaluru Airport	34.7	34
Panambur	34.8	34
Belagavi City	36.5	37
Belagavi Airport	38.8	37
Bidar	39	39
Vijayapura	40.6	40
Bagalkot	41.7	38
Dharwad	39.8	37
Gadag	39.6	37
Kalaburagi	42.9	41
Haveri	39.9	36
Koppal	41.5	39
Raichur	42	41
Bengaluru HAL Airport	37.4	34
Bengaluru City	38	34
Bengaluru KIA	38.1	35
Chamarajanagar	40	NA
Chikkamagaluru	36.5	33
Chitradurga	39.5	36
Davanagere	40.7	36
Hassan	37.7	33
Chintamani	37.6	35
Mandya	38.2	35
Madikeri	34	NA
Agumbe	33.5	NA
Chikkanahalli	41.4	NA

> In Karnataka, Congress has planned to rotate the post of the chief minister by handing it to the deputy chief minister after 2.5 years
> Narendra Modi, Prime Minister

Leaders try to predict results on poll turnout

DEVARAJ B HIREHALLI @ Bengaluru

SOON after polling for 14 Lok Sabha seats in the state on Friday, debates over the likely outcomes based on the urban-rural voting pattern has begun. The most talked about is Bengaluru Rural, where the stakes are high. Whether the low voter turnout in urban spaces benefit Congress or BJP is also the talking point.

In the Bengaluru Rural Lok Sabha constituencies, Assembly segments of Bengaluru South and RR Nagar registered 56.08%and 56.06% turnout, in semiurban Anekal it was 60.69%, in Kanakapura 84.77%, Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar's home constituency Channapatna registered 84.61%, Magadi 84.96%, Ramanagara 84.56% and Kunigal 85.26%. But the average for the entire constituency is 68.30%. Women at 69.03% fared better than men at 67.60%. Both BJP and Congress threw accusations at each other about distribution of big inducements to voters.

On the polling trend and low voter turnout in some areas, Shivakumar said, "I would like to thank all the voters for peaceful polling. Our (Congress) tally will reach double digits in the first phase itself."

Wins in Bengaluru

Congress leaders felt that their candidate DK Suresh has an edge over BJP's Dr CN Manjunath. But BJP-JDS leaders claimed that the good polling percentage in Assembly constituencies that have big rural voters is because the alliance has worked.

"The difference in polling percentage in rural and urban spaces will have no bearing on the results. We will win eight seats out of 14, including Bengaluru, because of the five guarantees and women voters tilted in our favour," claimed Ramesh Babu, KPCC media and communication chief.

Ramesh Babu blamed the ECI for low polling percentage as it failed to keep the electoral list in Bengaluru in good health with some names being deleted in areas like Gandhinagar.

Rajajinagar BJP MLA S Suresh Kumar attributed the low voting percentage in his constituency to some voters having their right to vote in multiple places."When a voter was requested to vote, he replied that his name is in three different constituencies and will vote in Bengaluru Rural as he liked the candidate, Dr CN Manjunath," he said.

Rajajinagar registered 51.1% polling. Suresh Kumar claimed that PC Mohan, the BJP Lok Sabha candidate from Bengaluru Central, will get over a 40,000-vote lead from Rajajinagar. Congress leaders, however, are hoping for a photo finish as its candidate Mansoor Ali Khan campaigned aggressively.

Similar predictions have been made in Bengaluru North (54.45% polling), where Union Minister Shobha Karandlaje is contesting against former RS member Prof MV Rajeev Gowda and Bengaluru South (53.17%), where BJP Yuva Morcha national president Tejasvi Surya faces a stiff challenge from Transport Minister Ramalinga Reddy's daughter Sowmya Reddy.

BJP, CONGRESS NOW TURN TO FACE CRUCIAL LINGAYAT CHALLENGE

AFTER the high-decibel contest in the Vokkaliga heartland, the electoral battle has now shifted to the Lingayat-dominated North Karnataka region. Up north, as the scorching sun pushes temperatures to exhausting highs, the BJP and Congress are engaged in a direct fight for 14 seats that will go to the polls on May 7.

Unlike in the Old Mysuru region, Janata Dal (Secular) is not a major force in these seats, though it has a presence in some pockets. The BJP-JDS alliance is largely limited to the constituencies that went to polls on April 26. While the regional party contested from three seats, it has a significant presence in the other 11 segments. So, the transfer of votes between the two was crucial for alliance candidates' success.

Anyway, the action has now shifted to the North and Central Karnataka regions and also parts of the Malnad as well as coastal Karnataka. Here, the real challenge for the BJP is to score a perfect 100 out of 100, if it is aiming to do an encore of its 2019 performance in the state. The party had swept all 14 seats, while the Congress drew a blank. Even Congress' stalwart Mallikarjun Kharge lost in his home district. He is currently a member of the Rajya Sabha.

But, in the last five years, much water has flown down the Krishna River, which traverses through North Karnataka districts. Political equations have changed considerably. Kharge is now the AICC president. Congress outpaced the BJP in the 2023 assembly polls. Here, the Grand Old Party is at its fighting best, unlike most parts of the country where it is at the mercy of its alliance partners or is struggling to match the BJP's firepower in direct contests.

As the determined Congress is going all guns blazing, it's a test for BJP to prove its sway over the Lingayat community, especially after chinks surfaced during the last year's assembly polls. In the 2023 election, Congress managed to woo a section of the Lingayat community that had solidly backed the BJP in the earlier elections. That was probably one of the reasons why BJP's tally went way below its conservative estimate.

However, compared to the assembly polls, the situation now looks much better for BJP. The voting pattern in Lok Sabha elections would be different from that of state elections, while the party would also be hoping to make the most of the Narendra Modi-BS Yediyurappa factor. In the previous elections, Yeddyurappa's political acumen had helped the BJP to translate Modi's popularity into votes and seats. Even this time the BJP will be banking on that factor heavily.

The party faces its share of challenges too. Former Deputy CM KS Eshwarappa is proving to be an irritant for Yediyurappa in his home district. Angered by the party's decision to deny a ticket to his son to contest from the Haveri-Gadag seat, Eshwarappa has jumped into the electoral fray as an independent from Shivamogga, to cause some trouble for Yediyurappa's son Raghavendra, who is seeking reelection.

Eshwarappa may not be able to dent the BJP's prospects, but in terms of optics, it has done the damage. In Dharwad LS seat, Lingayat seer Dingaleshwara Swami is up in arms against BJP's Pralhad Joshi. Here again, the seer may not be able to sweep away BJP's votes, but the development did help Congress to take a swipe at BJP on the Lingayat issue.

Many senior BJP leaders in the fray are former chief ministers Jagadish Shettar and Basavaraj Bommai, Union Ministers Pralhad Joshi, Bhagawant Khuba and Vishweshwar Hegde Kageri — the last replaced firebrand leader Ananth Kumar Hegde, who often kicked up controversies with his extreme rightist views.

On its part, Congress has fielded the kin of sitting ministers and top leaders from many seats, including Kharge's son-in-law Radhakrishna Doddamani from Kalaburgi. Winning Kalaburagi and the majority of seats in Kalyan Karnataka would be crucial for asserting Kharge's leadership within the party.

By and large, the election-related issues in South and North Karnataka are the same. The BJP is slamming Congress over its handling of severe drought, law-and-order situation, minority appeasement, diverting funds meant for SC/STs welfare for guarantee schemes, and development works coming to a standstill. The Congress's main poll planks remain the Centre's failure to adequately provide drought relief to the state, the alleged disparity in tax devolution, unemployment, price rise, implementation of guarantees as well as the failure to fulfill other promises made in its 2024 election manifesto.

As both sides pull all the stops to win a maximum number of seats, support from the dominant Lingayat community will play a crucial role. More so for the BJP, which will be keen to consolidate its support base. But, if the Congress manages to breach its Lingayat fortress again, it could ring alarm bells for the BJP in the long run. The developments in the next few days will not just impact the May 7 polls but have far-reaching implications on the political narrative in the state.

CAMPAIGN STOP

Cong, some BJP leaders want me to be in jail: Yatnal

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ Shahapur/Bengaluru

FORMER Union minister and BJP MLA **Basangouda Patil Yatnal** on Saturday alleged that Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar and RDPR Minister Priyank Kharge intend to file more cases against him and have him arrested, to deter him from campaigning in the Lok Sabha polls.

Speaking at a roadshow in Shahapur for BJP Raichur candidate Raja Amareshwar Nayak, Yatnal said: "There was a systematic conspiracy against me that I should be in jail to ensure that I don't campaign for our party candidates till May 7."

"In BJP, I am the one who is directly targeting CM Siddaramaiah, Shivakumar, Priyank. Some of the leaders within the BJP are not saying much directly because of 'adjustment politics'. I will share about who all are involved in the conspiracy against me after May 7," he said, when reporters asked if any one from his own party was against him.

BJP betrayed its candidate in Bengaluru Rural: DKS

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ Bengaluru

DEPUTY Chief Minister **DK Shivakumar** on Saturday alleged that the BJP leaders have betrayed its candidate Dr CN Manjunath, son-in-law of former prime minister HD Deve Gowda, who is the contestant for the Bengaluru Rural Lok Sabha seat, which went to the polls on Friday.

When asked about the Leader of Opposition R Ashoka's allegations that Chief Minister Siddaramaiah hatched a plot to defeat Congress candidate DK Suresh, Shivakumar shot back at Ashoka. "Former prime minister HD Deve Gowda himself has said that its alliance partner BJP hasn't cooperated in Mandya and Hassan for JDS candidates. The same thing has happened in Bengaluru Rural too," he claimed.

Repolling in MM Hills booth on Monday, villagers slip away

K SHIVA KUMAR @ Mysuru

A polling booth that was vandalised in Indiganatha village on Friday | FILE

THE Election Commission has ordered repolling at Indiganatha village in MM Hills police limits even as people have fled the village fearing police action for Friday's violence.

Repolling will be held at the government lower primary school at Indiganatha on Monday between 7am and 6pm.

The villagers, who boycotted polling in protest against lack of basic amenities at Indiganatha, had set fire to EVMs and furniture inside the booth and attacked election officials for "forcing" them to vote.

Most of the houses were locked when revenue and police officials visited the village on Saturday. The police arrested 14 people in connection with the violence on Friday evening. After this, villagers slipped into the woods after sunset and switched off their cell phones.

The police have identified 41 people, including some women, among the 250 mentioned in the FIR. The arrested were produced before the local court which sent them to judicial custody. A search is on for the others named in the FIR based on a complaint by ARO Mallikarjuna.

Tahsildar Guruprasad and PARO Basavanna, who were injured in the attack, have also filed police complaints. The cops are examining the CCTV footage at the booth to identify those involved in the attack.

People of Indiganatha had informed voters of neighbouring Mendara village about their plans to boycott polls and asked them not to participate in the elections. But when some Soligas from Mendara exercised their franchise under police protection, the trouble started.

The district administration has decided to shift the Soligas from Mendara to Nagamale Bhavan in MM Hills under police protection. Additional SP Umesh and his team are camping in Mendara. Chamarajanagar SP Padmini Sahoo said those involved in the attack and are at large will be arrested soon.

KALYANA KARNATAKA STATUS

Cong govt passed Art 371J in 2009, but work of Vaijnath Patil, ex-CMs cannot be forgotten

RAMAKRISHNA BADSESHI
@ Kalaburagi

WHILE the implementation of five guarantees has been the main plank for Congress in the Lok Sabha elections, the other equally important factor for the party in Kalyana Karnataka is its role in bringing an amendment to Article 371 J of the Constitution, benefiting the region. But BJP counters this claim.

Right from AICC president Mallikarjun Kharge to district-level leaders claim that youth in the region are getting special reservation in education and employment because of the special status. Also, infrastructure development throughout the region, comprising Bidar, Kalaburagi, Yadgir, Raichur, Koppal, Vijayanagar and Ballari districts, is because of the amendment. In public meetings, they repeatedly stress on Congress and its leaders, especially Kharge -- who was the Union minister then, being the bulwarks behind the amendment.

Kharge has been pointing out in his speeches that senior party leaders Sonia and Rahul Gandhi had promised ahead of the 2009 parliamentary polls that if Congress comes to power, it would bring in the amendment and that promise was kept. Kharge has said he met leaders of all parties several times and persuaded them to help the government pass the Amendment Bill. As a result, it was passed unanimously in both Houses, he has been asserting.

In the same breath he has also pointed out that BJP senior leader LK Advani, who was the then home minister, had rejected the proposal in 2002.

Khuba counters

But Union Minister of State for Chemicals and Fertilisers Bhagavant Khuba, who is Bidar BJP MP, counters this claim, saying the Bill was passed because of support by all parties in Parliament.

Kharge tries to take credit, but he has forgotten the contributions of former minister late Vaijnath Patil, whose brainchild was the amendment to Article 371 J, he adds.

Vaijnath Patil's contribution

The issue was not at all in the foreground before 1995. When JDS supremo HD Deve Gowda was chief minister in 1995, Vaijnath Patil of Kalaburagi was the urban development minister. Patil knew about the Article 371 D that provided special reservation in employment and education in Telangana of the then Andhra Pradesh and an amendment to Article 371 (2) to create a separate development board for Vidarbha and Marathwada regions of Maharashtra.

The Centre amended the Articles for Telangana and Vidarbha and Marathwada as they could not achieve progress because they were previously ruled by erstwhile Nizams of Hyderabad.

LK Advani's letter

Patil and former minister C Gurunath visited the three regions and studied the functioning of the amendments and how people were benefiting. They later submitted a report to the Karnataka Government.

Pressure from CMs

Between 1998 and 2009, former CMs, late JH Patel of Janata Dal, SM Krishna and late Dharam Singh of Congress and BS Yediyurappa of BJP wrote to Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee, then Home Minister Advani and then PM Manmohan Singh respectively about the amendment.

The first official communication on the proposal from the state to the Centre was sent on October 31, 1998 by then CM JH Patel. Writing to Vajpayee, he stated that the amendment would provide regional reservation in employment and education as well as for creating a regional development board. His successors Krishna and Dharam Singh continued the pressure.

On November 12, 2001, Krishna wrote to then Union Home Minister LK Advani reminding him of the letter written by JH Patel.

Proposal is not feasible: Advani

On November 22, 2002, Advani, who was then deputy prime minister, responded to Krishna, saying he had examined the matter, and the circumstances in Andhra Pradesh that led to the insertion of Article 371-D in the Constitution in 1973 do not exist in Karnataka. The Centre does not find the proposal of the Karnataka government feasible, he replied.

Manmohan too was not in favour

Then Prime Minister Manmohan Singh too was not in favour of the proposal. On January 12, 2009, he wrote to then CM Yediyurappa that the high-powered committee on redressal of regional imbalance did not recommend special status for the region. But Singh stated that the Centre could consider a proposal to establish development boards in Karnataka, including one in Hyderabad-Karnataka area as has been done in Maharashtra.

Article amended in 2009

As pressure from the public and organisations piled up, Congress used it as an issue in the 2009 Lok Sabha elections, assuring people that Article 371 would be amended if it comes to power. Voters of the region supported Congress in that poll, and the party government kept up its promise and issued the gazette notification on January 2, 2013, for special reservation and for setting up the Hyderabad-Karnataka Regional Development Board. The rules were framed later that year.

Though it is a fact that Kharge played a major role, contributions of chief ministers from 1998 till 2009 cannot also be forgotten.

BJP national president JP Nadda addresses an election campaign rally in Humnabad, Bidar district, on Saturday | EXPRESS

Congress govt sympathetic to PFI, SDPI, says Nadda

MARUTI BAVIDODDI
@ Humnabad (Bidar district)

THE Congress government led by Siddaramaiah is sympathetic towards organisations like the PFI and SDPI, alleged BJP National president JP Nadda in Humnabad, Bidar district, on Friday.

Addressing a 'Vijaya Sankalpa' convention here, Nadda said that an atmosphere of fear prevails in Karnataka which is ruled by the Congress. He cited instances of the recent bomb blast in a café in Bengaluru and the murder of a girl student on her college campus in Hubballi. "If people want a fearless society and a land that Mahatma Gandhi dreamt of where women can walk alone on the streets in the night without fear, people have to vote for the BJP," he said.

> His (Modi) achievements are being applauded by different countries. We have achieved self-sufficiency in grain production, medicines, toys, and electronic equipment
> JP Nadda, BJP national president

The BJP chief alleged that most of the Congress and I.N.D.I.A bloc leaders are in jail or out on bail for indulging in corruption. "The Congress and its alliance partners have not spared the Earth, the sky, or the sea for their corruption," he added.

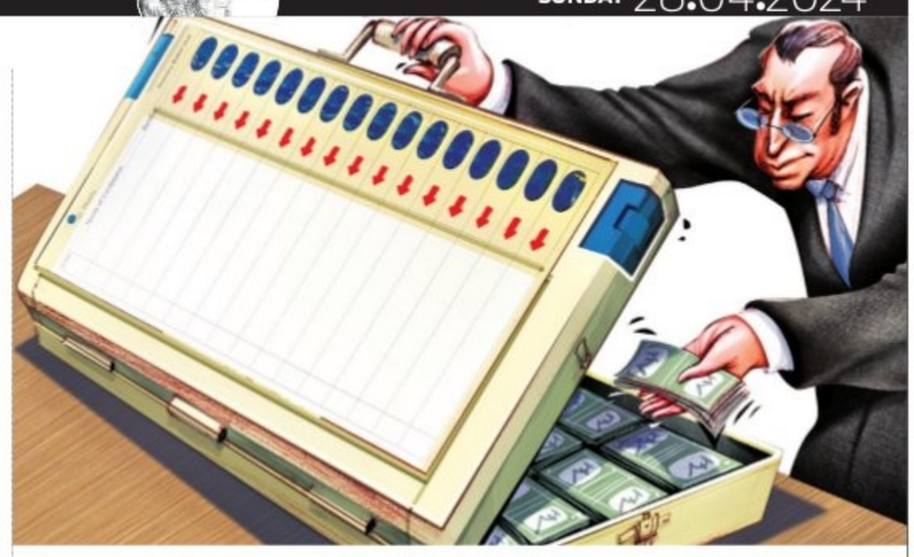
He also hailed PM Narendra Modi for giving a corruption-free government. "His (Modi) achievements are being applauded by different countries. We have achieved self-sufficiency in grain production, medicines, toys, and electronic equipment. Our country supplied medicines and vaccines to several countries during the Covid-19 pandemic," Nadda said, while campaigning for BJP Bidar candidate Bhagwanth Khuba.

EC EXPENDITURE ON LOK SABHA ELECTIONS & EXPENSES PER ELECTOR		
YEAR	EXPENDITURE (IN₹CR)	EXPENDITURE/ ELECTOR (IN₹)
2014	3,468.73 (350*)	41.6
2009	846.67 (840.15*)	12
2004	1,113.89 (679.12*)	17
1999	947.68	15
1998	666.22	11
1996	597.34	10
1991	359.1	7
1989	154.22	3.1
1984	81.51	2
1980	54.77	1.5
1977	23.04	0.7
1971	11.61	0.4
1967	10.8	0.4
1962	7.32	0.3
1957	5.9	0.3
1952	10.45	0.6

*(Released on provisional basis to all states/UTs)

Sharing expenses

The entire expenditure on actual conduct of elections to Lok Sabha is borne by Central government. If concurrent elections to Lok Sabha and state legislative assembly is held, the expenditure is shared between Central and respective state governments.

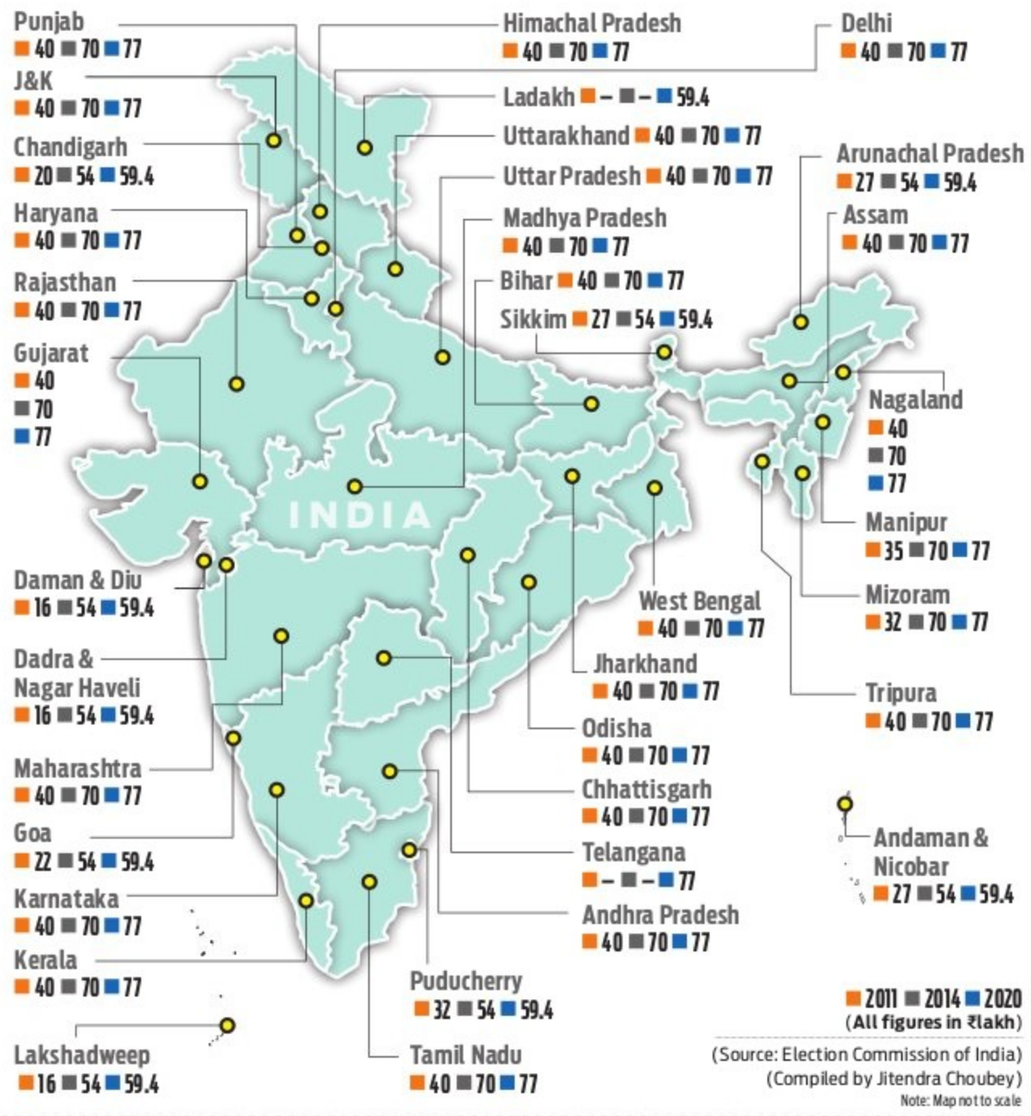


THE COST OF ELECTIONS

The Election Commission's expenditure per elector was 60 paise in 1952, which further reduced to 30 paise in the next two elections. In the two consecutive elections thereafter, the amount increased to 40 paise. In 1980, the expenditure crossed ₹1 for the first time and then to ₹1.5. By 2004, EC's expenses per elector stood at ₹17. It dropped to ₹12 in 2009, only to increase over three times to ₹41.6 in 2014. Here's a look:

STATEWISE LIMIT FOR CANDIDATES' EXPENDITURE

Section 77 (3) of the Representation of the People Act, 1951 stipulates that the election expenses of a candidate contesting a parliamentary or assembly constituency should not exceed a specified limit. The maximum limit of election expenditure for different states was first fixed during the first general elections in 1951. Since then, the ceiling has undergone several revisions, taking into consideration factors such as increase in number of electors, cost inflation index and geographical area of the constituency after delimitation.


Punjab 40 70 77
Himachal Pradesh 40 70 77
Delhi 40 70 77
J&K 40 70 77
Ladakh – – 59.4
Uttarakhand 40 70 77
Chandigarh 20 54 59.4
Uttar Pradesh 40 70 77
Arunachal Pradesh 27 54 59.4
Haryana 40 70 77
Madhya Pradesh 40 70 77
Assam 40 70 77
Rajasthan 40 70 77
Bihar 40 70 77
Sikkim 27 54 59.4
Gujarat 40 70 77
Nagaland 40 70 77
INDIA
Manipur 35 70 77
Mizoram 32 70 77
West Bengal 40 70 77
Daman & Diu 16 54 59.4
Tripura 40 70 77
Jharkhand 40 70 77
Dadra & Nagar Haveli 16 54 59.4
Odisha 40 70 77
Maharashtra 40 70 77
Chhattisgarh 40 70 77
Andaman & Nicobar 27 54 59.4
Goa 22 54 59.4
Telangana – – 77
Karnataka 40 70 77
Andhra Pradesh 40 70 77
Kerala 40 70 77
Puducherry 32 54 59.4
Lakshadweep 16 54 59.4
Tamil Nadu 40 70 77
2011 2014 2020
(All figures in ₹lakh)

(Source: Election Commission of India)
(Compiled by Jitendra Choubey)
Note: Map not to scale

ASSAM

Kharge takes on govt over jobs, 'broken' promises

PRASANTA MAZUMDAR @ Guwahati

CONGRESS president **Mallikarjun Kharge** made a scathing attack on Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday, stating that he could not fulfill even one of the several promises he had made.

In a presser in Guwahati, Kharge said, "He had promised two crore jobs. It was his guarantee. So, there should have been 20 crore jobs. He had stated that black money was stashed outside the country when the Congress was in power and he would bring it back and give ₹15 lakh to everyone. He had promised to double the income of farmers and build a house for every family by 2022. He could not implement any of these promises."

Stating that people who made this country independent were from the Congress, he said the BJP never fought for independence and development of the country, yet it talks a lot about patriotism. "They talk about it so much that Nehruji, Indiraji and Lal Bahadur Shastriji are nothing in front of them. Modiji is everything," Kharge said.

"They also say that India attained independence after 2014. I feel sad that people who grew up in the Congress and became leaders, say the same thing too. If the Congress was so bad, then why did you waste 30-40 years of your life in the party?" he asked.

He said Congress was fighting the current election to save the Constitution, democracy, and check the problems of inflation and unemployment. He said the farmers were upset while the people were facing a lot of hardships.

To a query, he said, "We are not trying to scare Modiji. Modiji is scaring everyone. He is scaring people through the CBI and ED. Did you hear Manmohan Singhji talk about snatching somebody's mangalsutra in the 10 years (when UPA was in power)? Did he ever talk ill of anyone? When he (Modi) talks, his statement carries no weight. That is his credibility," Kharge said.

He further pilloried the BJP on the electoral bond issue, stating that it was quid pro quo for the party.

ELECTION2024

Mumbai Cong leader says won't campaign

Mumbai Congress chief Varsha Gaikwad on Saturday met her disgruntled colleague Naseem Khan who a day earlier resigned from the party's poll campaign committee over lack of Muslim candidates. Incidentally, Khan was eyeing the Mumbai North Central seat but the Congress gave ticket to Gaikwad. After the meeting, Khan said he was firm on his decision about not campaigning. "Where will Muslims go? They (community) say the Congress wants our votes but then why no representation?" he asked.

Pawar warns of protest if Satara candidate of NCP(SP) arrested

NCP (SP) chief **Sharad Pawar** on Saturday said he will ensure democratic protests in every taluka of Maharashtra if his party's candidate from Satara, Shashikant Shinde, was arrested. "A case has been registered against Shinde in the 'APMC FSI matter'," the veteran politician said at a rally, adding, "Attempt is being made to bar him from contesting elections. If that happens and he is arrested, I will ensure that each and every taluka (tehsil) protests in a democratic manner."

Leaders of BJP OBC Morcha, Akali Dal & NSUI join AAP

BJP OBC Morcha secretary Kuldeep Singh Shanty, Akali Dal's SC wing general secretary Gurdarshan Lal and NSUI's Punjab vice-president Rahul Sharma on Saturday joined the AAP in the presence of Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann. AAP's Jalandhar Lok Sabha candidate Pawan Kumar Tinu and senior party leader Rajwinder Kaur Thiara were present.

BJP's fight for Sirsa gets tough as ex-JJP chief set to join Congress

HARPREET BAJWA @ Chandigarh

FORMER Haryana unit president of Jannayak Janta Party (JJP) **Nishan Singh** is all set to join the Congress. This makes the fight on the Sisra (reserved) Lok Sabha seat in the state more interesting.

Former Union minister and Ex-Haryana Congress unit president Kumari Selja is pitched against Ashok Tanwar of the BJP, who was earlier the state Congress chief.

The JJP is the former coalition partner of the BJP in the state. Sources said Nishan Singh may join Congress on April 29 with his supporters. Singh had, a few days ago, met former chief minister and leader of the opposition Bhupinder Singh Hooda. A close aide of him claimed that along with Singh, JJP workers from Sirsa, Fetehabad, Hisar and other districts will also join the grand old party.

Singh was JJP's state unit president ever since the party's formation in 2018. He is a former MLA of Tohana assembly segment in Fatehabad district. He won from the Tohana seat in 2000 as an Indian National Lok Dal (INLD) candidate and consecutively lost thrice in 2005, 2009 and 2014.

In the 2019 assembly elections, JJP nominated former Congress leader Devender Singh Babli, who won after defeating the then BJP state chief Subhash Barala.

Sources said Singh's chances of joining the Congress hinge on an assurance of getting an assembly election ticket from Tohana. The assembly polls are due later this year. Tohana assembly seat is a part of the Sirsa parliamentary constituency.

Singh was seen as a trusted ally of former deputy chief minister Dushyant Chautala. He had personally conveyed his decision to quit the party to the JJP's national president Ajay Chautala.

In January this year, former Haryana Congress chief Ashok Tanwar quit the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) and joined the BJP. Tanwar was chairman of AAP's state election campaign committee and he had opposed AAP national convener Arvind Kejriwal's decision to have alliance with Congress in the Lok Sabha polls.

An SC leader, Tanwar is a former MP from Sirsa and a former Haryana Congress president who resigned from the party in 2019 and switched to the Trinamool Congress in November 2021.

The Sirsa contest

Former Union minister and Ex-Haryana Congress unit president Kumari Selja is pitched against Ashok Tanwar of the BJP, earlier the state Congress chief

Vying for Tohana

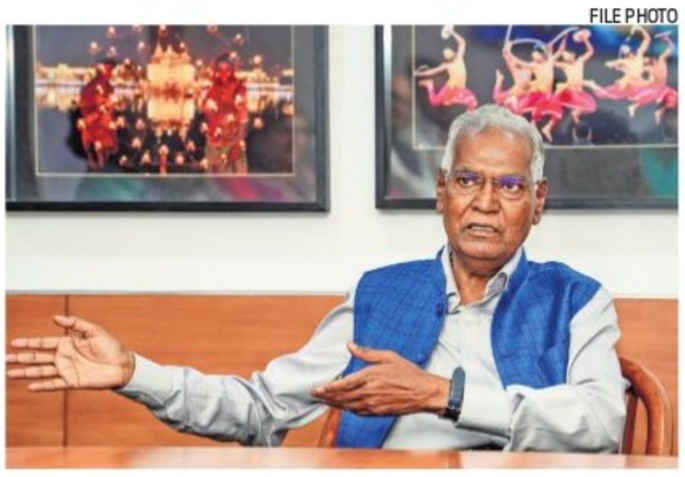
Nishan Singh won from the Tohana seat in 2000 as an INLD candidate, but lost thrice in 2005, 2009 and 2014. In the 2019 assembly polls, JJP fielded Devender Singh Babli from the seat. Sources said Singh's chances of joining the Congress hinge on an assurance of getting an assembly election ticket from Tohana.

Singh meets Hooda

Sources said Nishan Singh may join Congress on April 29 with his supporters. Singh had, a few days ago, met former chief minister and leader of the opposition Bhupinder Singh Hooda. A close aide of him claimed that along with Singh, JJP workers from Sirsa, Fetehabad, Hisar and other districts will also join Congress.

No joint manifesto, common programme of Oppn after polls

FILE PHOTO



PREETHA NAIR @ New Delhi

WITH two phases of parliamentary elections over, the opposition is unlikely to issue a 'joint manifesto,' according to sources.

The INDIA bloc parties will consider drafting a common minimum programme after forming the government at the Centre, said D Raja, Communist Party of India (CPI) leader and a key member of the opposition alliance.

There was no consensus, though some parties discussed the idea of a joint manifesto for the Lok Sabha elections, said Raja. "No decision was taken by parties on a common manifesto. We don't feel the need as each party has released its manifestos separately. The opposition will consider a common minimum programme after the INDIA bloc would be able to form the government at the Centre. Then, all these questions will be addressed," he said.

Early this month, Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) leader Sanjay Singh met Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge and pitched a common minimum programme for the Opposition bloc for the Lok Sabha elections. Singh said that people should be made aware of the major promises of the alliance and how it will be fulfilled in a time-bound manner.

Though there were discussions among the partners regarding releasing a set of "common guarantees" ahead of the second rally in Jharkhand, nothing was announced.

Though there are some common features such as unemployment, caste census and legalising the MSP in the manifestos released by these parties, on the key poll issue of the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA), Congress, SP and RJD have maintained silence, while DMK, CPM and CPI have promised its repeal.

The opposition will consider a common minimum programme after the INDIA bloc would be able to form the government

D Raja, CPI leader

Promises

The caste census remains a key promise for many INDIA bloc parties, including the Congress, RJD, SP, CPM, CPI, and DMK. TMC is silent on the issue, but it has promised a task force to evaluate OBC status for unrecognised communities.

QUOTE CORNER

Congress is mulling having five prime ministers in five years if voted to power. In Karnataka it planned to rotate the CM post

Narendra Modi, Prime Minister

If BJP claims nothing happened in the past 70 years, then let us believe that IITs, AIIMS, and big industries, were all built now

Priyanka Gandhi, Congress leader

Not challenging the abrogation of Article 370 in SC would have made things worse politically for J&K's mainstream parties

Sajad Lone, JKPC chief

'Come home to vote', C'garh dist makes video calls to migrants

EJAZ KAISER @ Raipur

THE Mungeli district authorities in Chhattisgarh are contacting people from the area who have migrated to other places in search of a livelihood through video calls and encouraging them to return to exercise their franchise in the ongoing Lok Sabha polls.

Over 22,000 workers, away from their home districts, have been contacted. The vision remains to meet the mandate of the Election Commission under the Systematic Voters Education & Electoral Participation (SVEEP) programme, but with a unique touch. Mungeli, under the Bilaspur Lok Sabha constituency, is about 125 km from Raipur.

"While analysing the previous polls' voter turnout, we found that with many migrant workers being away, the desired high polling could not be achieved. Then a strategy was put into action to connect with such people and encourage them to return and be a part of the festival of democracy," Rahul Deo, Mungeli collector, told this newspaper.

The mission 'Shat Pratishat Matdan Mungeli Ka Abhiman' (100% voting for Mungeli's pride) was floated among the migrant labourers as the government officials continued to connect with them on video calls. The data of such workers away is available to the election booth-level officers and the gram panchayat secretaries.

Why video calling? Such calls by authorities make the receivers realise the significance of voting in democracy besides elevating their self-esteem.

The video connected to mobile phones ensures the officials are convincing the right persons during a visit to their habitations.

"It's heartening to see that the responses have been extremely positive as they pledged to return to vote," said the collector.

"It was a pleasant surprise when officials called to remind us about our democratic rights. We will come back to vote," said Sampat Marawi, a native of Lormi working in Hyderabad.

"We acknowledge the efforts of the local authorities to strengthen the voter's participation," Krishna Sahu from Patharia tehsil.

As an incentive to these migrants for their willingness to return to their polling places, the district has planned to welcome them all.

14-member committee

The newly formed 14-member committee, led by former state president Dhanendra Sahu as coordinator, will immediately take action to facilitate regular discussions and maintain strong connections with party leaders and cadres

"Whatever it is that the government does, sensible Americans would prefer that the government do it to somebody else. This is the idea behind foreign policy

P J O'Rourke

GOOGLIES & YORKERS FROM THE INDIAN POLITICAL LEAGUE

THE THIRD EYE

SHANKKAR AIYAR
Author of *The Gated Republic, Aadhaar: A Biometric History of India's 12 Digit Revolution*, and *Accidental India*
(shankkar.aiyar@gmail.com)

THE Indian Premier League has unveiled a new paradigm this season. The players have blown away conventional strike rate math—nine teams have scored over 250 runs in 120 balls and there are 10 centurions already. Eerily, the Indian Political League is similarly upending existing templates—if records are being smashed on the ground, rhetoric is erasing the norms and boundaries of expression and assertion in E2024.

The effects are in stark contrast. Those tuning in to the matches are thrilled at the blitzkrieg of strokes, while those tuned into the ricocheting rhetoric are dismayed and even the parish of believers is filled with a sense of disquiet. As on the field, there is no dearth of lofty shots, mystifying and mind-numbing claims which stretch credulity with googlies and yorkers galore. And mind you #2024Elections is yet in the 'power play' stage, with only two of seven phases completed.

The context is riveted by troubling questions awaiting answers and will hopefully trigger conscientious introspection on the stated and unstated intent of political contestants and quality of conversations in the world's largest democracy. Here are a few observations and posers to catalyse contemplation on the state of the nation.

Like the unthinkable and unexpected has transpired. Manifestos till date were essentially item songs stringing election campaigns. Surprisingly, manifestos have emerged as the theme song of mass campaign rallies. The Congress may not have quite expected the volume of interest in the idiom of its political promise; its Nyay Patra may have notched some traffic for downloads.

The lather in the media has been about whether or not the Nyay Patra explicitly states the confiscation of private wealth for redistribution. What is troubling is the underlining of euphemisms—mangalsutra, trespassers and those who birth many children—deployed as instruments of identification resulting in polarisation. The Congress may argue about what is explicit but in a fast-evolving election cycle politics is scaffolded by perceptions of implicit beliefs.

Like the shift in narrative and campaign messaging is stark. Following the consecration of the Ram temple, the general belief was that 2024 is a done deal. February saw the unveiling of the '*Abki baar 400 paar*' slogan, with the BJP crossing the Rubicon of 350 on its own. The past week's events haven't altered perceptions about the trajectory, but they have triggered questions—even among the believers—on the numerical destination.

The question being discussed in living rooms is less about the character of political postulation and more about what caused the ratcheting of rhetoric. Popular theory defines this as a response to the low turnout of voters in the first phase and is overlaid on a rich tapestry of allusions of the geography of contests and location of strategic discussions that preceded the onslaught. The moot question is whether the blitzkrieg is being designed to ramp up voter turnout, or whether the ramp-up of messaging was aimed at galvanising the turnout of the cadre.

There is no mistaking that the contest between the BJP-led front and the opposition is marked by an asymmetry in capacity and capability worsened by the Congress's affected articulation and struggle for space. The manifesto is decently detailed on some promises and patchy in parts. The declaration of a caste x-ray and a financial survey without explanation has opened up a can of claims and has been leveraged by the BJP.

Unsurprisingly, the debate is focussed on inheritance tax, which the BJP has highlighted and the Congress is laboriously denying following the utterances of family friend Sam Pitroda. Inequality is a complex subject and has occupied the minds of philosophers ranging from Hume and Mill to Rawls. History tells us that taxes on wealth and estate have been tried and discarded.

Any attempt to address systemic inequities must start with the gaps in policies—for instance, liberating agriculture from the curse of imperfect economic models. Sure, the caste census may illuminate the faultlines, but that information—something the UPA failed to make public in 2013—is at best only a starting point. Tackling asymmetries of ability and opportunity require policy intervention—investments in health, education and skilling.

The redistribution debate is waylaid by definitions. The debate must focus on can, and should, wealth be corralled and redistributed, or should mitigation be funded by revenues garnered. That said, there is redistribution visible on India's balance sheet—in schemes and provisions of private goods. India spends over ₹5 lakh crore on centrally sponsored schemes. The free ration to 81.3 crore, the health coverage to 50 crore, the provision of housing, the direct benefit transfers to farmers and women are all crafted from the receipts section and detailed in the budget.

For a change, the reality of a two-speed, K-shaped economy has found space in the political theatre. The truth about India's poverty is embedded in one statistical fact—nearly half the workforce engaged in agriculture must depend on a sixth of the national income. This column has previously illustrated the political geography of India's economy. There is no escaping the sectoral and geographic divergence and need for policy intervention.

Finally, the Congress seems to possess an uncanny knack of contributing to the BJP's campaign. In 2014, it was the '*chaiwala*' refrain, in 2019 it was the '*Chowkidar chor hai*' slogan, and in 2024 it's inheritance tax. India deserves better—a landscape of competitive ideas, not just an argument industry.

WHY MODI IS WESTERN MEDIA'S HATE MAGNET

POWER & POLITICS

PRABHU CHAWLA
prabhuchawla@newindianexpress.com
Follow him on X @PrabhuChawla

PRIME Minister Narendra Modi has had the best of relations with Western leaders in his two terms so far. Not so with the Western media, who have an assortment of descriptors for him ranging from strongman to autocrat. His government's response to the carefully orchestrated verbal assault has been a disdainful scorn for traditional media, masked in a new aura of confidence in national supremacy and a refusal to be the Western media's favourite whipping boy. This was demonstrated yet again when Rahul Gandhi's Indian American advisor inherited from his late father, Sam Pitroda, weaponised recent Western media headlines in an attack on Modi. In an age of WhatsApp forwards and meme fests, news has become content to be embellished with bells and whistles. And what should be highlighted and headlined is usually the responsibility of a select few gatekeepers, not all of them in the media.

As India moves ahead to elect its 18th Lok Sabha since independence, headlines and selective statements culled from newspaper interviews and TV debates have become news. So it was no surprise when Pitroda posted a compilation of over 50 headlines on India carried by various media outlets from all over the world. These headlines, chosen from various publications from Washington to Wellington, reflected, according to the BJP, hatred for Modi and contempt for Indian institutions. The maximum number of headlines from the past few months were chosen from *The New York Times*, *The Guardian*, *The Economist*, *Financial Times*, *LA Times*, *Reuters*, *Le Monde*, *Time* magazine and *Bloomberg*, among many others. The message from all was similar, as if it was dictated by the same thought process. Pitroda's social media blitz was deliberately launched to influence voters. Within a couple of days, his X post was viewed by over half a million Xians. Not only was it amplified by pro-Congress enthusiasts but also by the Sangh *parivar*, with the aim of demolishing the credibility of global news organisations.

Here are some of the headlines chosen by Pitroda:

'Modification of India is almost complete,' Time

'India's election: fixing a win by outlawing dissent damages democracy,' The Guardian

'Progressive South is rejecting Modi,' Bloomberg

'The mother of democracy is not in good shape,' Financial Times

'Modi's temple of lies,' The New York Times

'India a democracy in name only,' Le Monde

'Narendra Modi's illiberalism may imperil India's economic progress,' The Economist

'Democratic backsliding in India could prompt the West to review its cooperation with Delhi,' Chatham House

'Why is Biden silent on Modi and India's slide toward autocracy?' LA Times

'Authoritarian drift in the world's largest democracy,' The Informant, New Zealand

When almost all the major international publications were carrying an acerbic diatribe against India, foreign correspondents based in New Delhi also joined what the BJP claimed was a 'defame and demolish Modi operation'. The Australian Broadcasting Corporation's South Asia bureau chief Avani Dias left India claiming she wasn't given a visa and was denied an opportunity to cover the elections. The government dismissed her claims as motivated. But that didn't deter 30 foreign journalists from issuing a statement saying: "Foreign journalists in India have grappled with increased restrictions on visas and journalism permits for those holding the status of Overseas Citizen of India. The circumstances of Ms Dias's departure are further cause for concern. We call on the Indian government to facilitate the vital work of a free press in line with India's democratic traditions."

Earlier, French journalist Vanessa Dougnac had also accused the government of unilaterally revoking her OCI card for controversial reporting. The government is clearly uncomfortable with the reporting by foreign media, especially given the stark contrast with a considerably more pliable media at home. The government is convinced that these reports are not based on facts and provide distorted views rather than factual news.

Excessive interest from the Western media in Indian elections has always been perceived as interference in domestic affairs. Even Indira Gandhi was targeted by the American media when she refused to buckle under their negative projection. When India conducted nuclear tests during Atal Bihari Vajpayee's tenure, Western news organisations painted India as the villain of the peace. It blamed India for spending on nuclear weapons rather than the far more urgent need to alleviate poverty.

Barring a few exceptions, self-proclaimed foreign clairvoyants have been predicting doom for India in spite of its record GDP growth. While they may have some justification for their critical reporting, the same Western news conglomerates have been ignoring attacks on freedom of expression in many other countries including China and Russia. As one of the senior BJP leaders put it: "They draw the conclusions first and find the facts later which they get right." Even External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar, who has been cultivating the American media his entire career, found faults. He has said the foreign media attacks India "not because they lack information, but because they think they are also political players in our elections".

He has a point. The tenor of reportage does reflect intentions. Of late, the media has been taking sides based on ideological predilections. Even in the US, the media is divided between those who adore Trump and those who abhor him. A similar situation prevails in India as Modi considers himself the worst victim of a motivated media. Modi loyalists charge that the elitist and illiberal foreign media haven't been able to digest the rise of a '*chaiwala*' as the prime minister of the largest democracy. While it ignores the vicious attacks on the Jewish community in the West, it indulges in Modi-bashing while reporting from India. The PM likes attention, but only on his own terms. Like Indira Gandhi, he too patronises selective media. His visible hostility to the media stems for his experience as Gujarat chief minister. Modi was humiliated by the Western media, which ensured that he was denied a US visa.

As PM, he has kept both the Indian and the foreign press at an arm's length. He has become the first PM not to address a single press conference in a decade. He has stopped taking the press corps with him on his domestic or foreign visits. And as he seeks a third consecutive mandate, the battle lines have been sharply drawn. Every powerful leader would like to manipulate and manage the media. Dissemination of irresponsible and inaccurate news makes his or her job much easier. That is precisely what the foreign media is doing in many countries including India, with all the news that is not fit to print, leave alone trusted.

A CASE AGAINST AUTOMATED VOICE MESSAGES

OPINION

ANURADHA GOYAL
Author and founder of IndiTales.com
Follow her on X @anuradhagoyal

A deluge of automated voice messages is the latest menace we all are facing. A series of numbers starting with 713xx is used solely to send you voice-recorded messages at any time of the day, including early morning. You can keep blocking the numbers, but they will keep coming back with a different one.

What do these messages say? The one I receive most often says they are from the ministry of home affairs and calling for a Swachhata Sarvekshan or cleanliness survey. If only I could answer them, I would tell them how they spoil my peace of mind and invoke anger, leaving my mental energy unclean. Then there are credit card offers, loan offers and insurance sellers. The worst are the callers who dial random numbers and then want to know who you are. Many use the tactic of pretending to be an old friend you have forgotten. They get a precious few seconds' access to your phone till you figure out the real motive.

From a business perspective, I do not see any conversion happening through these automated calls. In fact, they may well work against the brand and antagonise potential customers. The top brand recall is that of the sheer nuisance they add to my day. Even if I am looking for a product or service you are selling, I would stay away from a brand that has annoyed me enough already. You have been a productivity killer for me, interrupted my precious sleep or the flow of my conversations, and broken a creative thought process.

If marketing calls are a nuisance, fraudsters take it to another level. Lately, I have been getting calls from Bengaluru-based landlines saying all the mobile phones linked to my Aadhaar number would be disconnected in the next two hours unless I do what the caller tells me to. I disconnect even before the complete message is spoken. But I remember that when I received it the first time it did scare me, for what would we do without a mobile phone. It is obviously a scam, as my phone is still working.

Another day, I received a similar threat that my credit card would be discontinued unless I instantly did my KYC. I might have fallen for it, but for the fact that I did not have any credit card from the bank they mentioned. I have had innumerable job offers from absolute strangers on WhatsApp that start by saying hello like an old lost friend.

The Do Not Call registry exists in principle, but in practice it has no meaning whatsoever. I have forgotten the number of times I have registered the request with my mobile service provider; but am yet to see any impact. Is it not the time to implement with an iron hand? I am sure the cybercrime authorities can do with fewer cases to handle.

The baniya in me thinks here is a great opportunity for telecom operators and the government to create a revenue model around automated messages. As of today, these messages cost hardly anything to the senders, while they may be overloading the systems for service providers or messaging platforms. Making the cost pinch the sender will make the marketing teams think judiciously.

Automated voice messages disturb us at all hours. Do not call registries don't work and caller identification is often faulty. Telecom firms should warn users about ads, as they can get in the way of genuine alerts from the authorities

Today, when they are just rampantly flooding my inboxes, the cost is borne by me in terms of lost productivity and annoyance. They just buy databases available at a throwaway prices, which is another area needing strict regulation. If sending mass messages cost the sender substantially, they would at least work on customer segmentation and send it to only those who are most likely to convert. Another way to get around this may be the way advertising works for content creators. Let advertisers pay for people to listen to their messages. UPI and e-wallets can easily enable it.

I strongly think the government should restrict automated voice messaging to emergency announcements like weather alerts, disruption in services or potential threats the citizens ought to know. Right now, even if they want to send an alert, I would probably not pick up an unknown number. Yes, they can have special numbers to communicate emergency messages, but they will have to think ahead of scamsters who will find a way to impersonate them.

At the very least, there can be a compulsory disclaimer that it is an advertisement. Can there be an audio marker that tells us that this message is from the authorities or advertisers that can help us decide to pick or not to pick? Caller identification worked for a while, but not many are willing to pay for a data with limited reliability.

For telecom firms, KYC is the key to trace those sending these messages from multiple numbers. If there are too many block requests for a number, the firms should double-check the credentials. For a higher number of blocks, a fraud alert should be triggered. The cyber police and telecom operators need to work as a team for proactive prevention.

Unless we restrict unwarranted access to our phones, we are sitting on a minefield of scams, besides losing our precious productivity. The more power we assign to our phones, more they become vulnerable for misuse.

QUOTE CORNER

Apologising is the easy part. We have to pay the costs. Are there actions that were not punished and those responsible were not arrested? Are there goods that were looted and not returned? Let's see how we can repair this.

Marcelo Rebelo de Sousa, Portugal president, on paying reparations for slavery; Portugal kidnapped and sold into slavery at least 12.5 million Africans and thousands of Indians over four centuries

Remember when Trump was trying to deal with Covid, he suggested injecting a little bleach in your veins? He missed, it all went to his hair.

Joe Biden, US president, in a speech to the largest American builders' union

What are we? We, in these streets for months and months, are the exodus. The exodus from Zionism.

Naomi Klein, author and political analyst, calling Zionism 'a false idol' that has betrayed core Jewish values and created 'roadmaps for ethnic cleansing and genocide'

MAILBAG

WRITE TO letters@newindianexpress.com

Failed visit

Kudos for your editorial on the Delhi lieutenant-governor's canvassing in Kerala. Some church leaders said later that they stood for a secular government, which means Vinai Saxena's trip was a failure. Saxena's claim to have come to attend a hospital inauguration may be true, but it is a hospital built by the head of Believers Church, who is known to have cheated many in the US and Kerala.

V O Harindranathan, Chennai

Greater good

Ref: *My neighbour who envisioned another India* (Apr 27). The author rightly highlighted L K Advani's laudable views that secularism does not mean running away from religion, and that religion should not be used as a tool for political oppression. One could not agree more with his call for bringing all religions together for the nation's greater good.

N Rama Rao, email

Indirect slight

While I share the author's respect for L K Advani, I think his real intention was to suggest Narendra Modi's greed for power. Had the BJP got the majority in 2009, Advani would have been PM. By the way, was Indira Gandhi the senior leader when Shastri died? Was Rajiv the senior when Indira died? We don't apply the same yardstick to the GOP.

Shreeram Paranjpe, Bengaluru

Leadership styles

At ISRO's Vikram Sarabhai Space Centre, I interacted with two union leaders, C P Ravindran and Johnson Fernandez. Ravindran was a mild-mannered and reasonable person, Fernandez was a firebrand. Vajpayee was like Ravindran, Advani like Fernandez. For me, a decisive leadership is needed at the moment and Modi is providing it.

A Rajakumar, email

EVM order

Hats off to the Supreme Court judges who put their foot down against the plea for introducing verifiable audits for all votes. Ironically, when opposition parties won elections in Tamil Nadu, Karnataka and Telangana, they were satisfied with the voting machines. Hence the INDIA bloc leaders must be bold enough to digest their loss gracefully. If they continue to file cases against EVMs, the Supreme Court should penalise them for wasting the court's time.

N Viswanathan, Coimbatore

Braille option

No country can be prosperous and secure without free and fair elections. Every citizen has the right to cast his or her vote. In India, there are around two million people who suffer from either blindness or severe vision loss, but the government has yet to provide adequate facilities for visually impaired voters. The Election Commission should improve the deployment of Braille signage on voting machines.

Jubel D'Cruz, Mumbai

Kerala turnout

It is really surprising that the turnout in Kerala was only around 70 percent, in spite of the fact that Kerala is a highly literate and politically conscious state. The people should consider voting as a responsibility rather than an option. Maybe in the future, it can be made compulsory.

P S K Rao, Ottapalam

Other sports

Jyothi Surekha from Vijayawada reached the finals of the Archery World Cup held recently in Shanghai. The athletes showed their ability against other countries. We should not be spending such a lot of money only on cricket, but also on all other sports, giving all kinds of encouragement to the players.

B Meghnatham, Visakhapatnam

Senior care

As a senior citizen from Sivanchetty Gardens, I cannot walk up to the Shivaji Nagar bus stand in Bengaluru. It is horrible to walk through the garbage-filled area. Efforts should be made to immediately open a pedestrian cross. This is one of the reasons for getting a lower voting percentage.

Anbazhagan Appadurai, email

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POSTS OF THE DAY

Pawan Khera @Pawankhera
Talking about changing the constitution is not just talk – it is their real agenda. The favorite BJP leader of PM Modiji is publicly making people pledge to end reservation.

P. Chidambaram @PChidambaram_IN
Modi Sarkar has gone. It was BJP Sarkar for a few days. Since yesterday, it is NDA Sarkar. Have you noticed the change that has happened since April 19?

Aaditya Thackeray @AUThackeray
Once again, Maharashtra faces injustice from the bjp, only to benefit Gujarat. Why can't both states be given equal treatment?

After four months, onion export to 6 countries allowed

JITENDRA CHOUBEY @ New Delhi

AFTER four months of removing the ban on onion exports, the Government of India has finally allowed the export of onions to six neighbouring countries. This decision comes one day after permitting Gujarat to export white onions to West Asian countries.

The government has approved the export of 99,150 metric tons of onions to six neighbouring countries: Bangladesh, UAE, Bhutan, Bahrain, Mauritius, and Sri Lanka. The National Cooperative Exports Limited, the designated agency for onion exports, has procured domestic onions through an e-platform at L1 prices.

NCEL will supply onions to agencies nominated by the destination countries at negotiated rates, based on a 100% advance payment basis. The export quotas allocated to these six countries are being fulfilled according to the requisitions made by each destination. As the largest onion producer in the country, Maharashtra serves as the primary supplier of onions sourced by NCEL for export.

Experts suggest that the decision to allow exports comes after criticism from Maharashtra's onion farmers and traders. This backlash ensued when, on April 26, the Centre permitted the export of Gujarat's white onions to the Middle East instead of other onion varieties.

Onion exports were banned on December 8 last year until March 31, 2024, to control domestic prices. This ban was later extended due to concerns about price inflation.

Reduced onion production during the Rabi and Kharif periods in 2023 prompted the government to implement measures to stabilise prices and ensure sufficient domestic supply. In August, a 40% export duty was imposed, followed by the establishment of a minimum export price of $800 per tonne in October, before the eventual export ban in December.

The Department of Consumer Affairs (DoCA) has set a procurement target of 500,000 tonnes of onions from the Rabi-2024 harvest for the Price Stabilization Fund this year. In April 2024, a high-level team from the DoCA and its procurement agencies visited Nashik and Ahmednagar Districts of Maharashtra to raise awareness among farmers about the procurement of 500,000 tonnes of onions for the PSF buffer.

Iran will release 16 Indian sailors as goodwill gesture

Indian embassy in Tehran following up issue after Jaishankar's call

YESHI SELI @ New Delhi

NEARLY a fortnight after Iran's Revolutionary Guards seized an Israeli ship, which had 17 Indian sailors on board (the lone Indian woman sailor returned to Kochi), there is hope of the remaining 16 Indian sailors to be released and sent back. The ship was seized on April 13.

Iranian foreign minister Hossein Amirabdollahain in a phone call that he made to his Portugese counterpart said that they were considering the release of the sailors on humanitarian grounds.

The ship that was seized had a Portuguese flag and was reportedly owned by an Israeli.

"We are seriously considering the release of the sailors on the ship as a humanitarian exercise. We have asked the respective ambassadors in Tehran for their consular services, release and extradition to their countries," the Iranian Foreign Minister said on Saturday.

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar had called and spoken to his Iranian counterpart requesting for the sailors' release. The Indian embassy in Tehran has been continuously following up the issue.

Iranian officials earlier stated that the Indian sailors were not imprisoned but were on the ship due to bad weather (initially) and that they were free.

The Indian government has refrained from commenting on this statement yet, but there is optimism that the remaining sailors will return soon.

Release of sailors on humanitarian grounds

Iranian foreign minister Hossein Amirabdollahain in a phone call that he made to his Portugese counterpart said that they were considering the release of the sailors on humanitarian grounds. The ship that was seized had a Portuguese flag and was reportedly owned by an Israeli. "We are seriously considering the release of the sailors on the ship as a humanitarian exercise," the Iranian Foreign Minister said on Saturday.

On April 19, Ann Tessa Joseph, a woman deck cadet returned to Kochi . She was among the 17 Indian sailors on board MSC Aries that was seized by Iran.

"Joseph from Thrissur, Kerala, landed in Cochin airport on Thursday afternoon. This was a result of the concerted efforts of the Indian mission in Tehran and the Iranian government," the MEA said.

Joseph said her release was unexpected. "On Wednesday evening, I was told to pack up and get ready to move out of the ship, which was anchored. It was totally unexpected. I was released because I was the only woman among the 25-member crew. From the ship, they took me to the shore by a pilot boat. I was told not to reveal the rest of the route of the journey to Kerala," she said.

"I spoke with Iranian Foreign Minister Amirabdolahian and took up the release of 17 Indians in MSC Aires. We discussed the situation in the region and stressed the importance of avoiding escalation, exercising restraint and returning to diplomacy," Jaishankar earlier said, adding that he would remain in touch with Amirabdolahian.

D GUKESH

SMART MOVES: WHEN KNIGHT BECOMES KING

SWAROOP SWAMINATHAN

Mandar Pardikar

IN the days after D Gukesh became the youngest to win the Candidates, the International Chess Federation (FIDE), tweeted an official video from when the Indian was 12 years. "I want to become the world champion," he said then. He's now mere months away from challenging China's Ding Liren in the summit clash. The win would make him only the second Indian to become the champion and first since his idol, Viswanathan Anand.

In five years, the Indian, the third youngest GM in history, has already blossomed into one of the finest Classical chess exponents. If you want somebody to go for an all-out attack, call Gukesh. If you want somebody to launch periodical skirmishes while maintaining structure, he's already getting there. He has already displayed his razor-sharp moves, even as he maintains ultra calm.

Going into the 14th and final round of the Candidates (the elite eight-player field from where the winner goes to play the reigning world champion) on April 21, the 17-year-old was faced with a general dilemma. He was leading the field by 0.5 points and was up against Hikaru Nakamura, one of three players, half-a-point behind. In one of the other games, Ian Nepomniachtchi faced Fabiano Caruana, two players who could still catch Gukesh provided there was a winner in that match.

The Chennai-born player had destiny in his own hands; if he beat Nakamura, he would advance. If he drew, that result could potentially invite tie-breakers in the Rapid format a day later. Stick or twist? It's here that his role clarity played a big part. He didn't play for a draw. "We always play to win," Vishnu Prasanna, his coach, told this newspaper hours after the match. "We can win but what's the best way to go there? Be patient and wait for chances. Nothing too reckless but go for the win when you have to." He remained rock solid and played out a draw after 71 moves.

In the other game, Caruana and Nepomniachtchi went at it for over six hours. The former had multiple chances but blundered. In the end, they signed a peace deal after over a 100 moves. "I'm very sorry," the Russian, a Candidates veteran who either had sole or joint lead in 40 of the previous 41 rounds, said. "My fault," Caruana managed. It just puts into context the scale of Gukesh's achievements. He was a novice up against some of the best battle-hardened veterans in the modern history of chess. To come out on the other side unscathed and victorious is monumental.

When the tournament began, everyone didn't rate Gukesh's chances of an upset. A couple of reasons: One, he lacked experience. Two, his 2023 wasn't pretty. He had stumbled into the Candidates, getting in via the Circuit thanks to taking part in a tournament that was essentially organised to help him qualify in Chennai.

So, how did he overcome his own inexperience? "There are pros and cons," he had said after he won the tournament. "Considering my age and, say, lack of experience, there are also some advantages. (In) such a long tournament, it's easier to stay focused at my age, I guess."

The one thing that he continues to exhibit is his remarkable maturity for somebody who is a teenager. It's something Liren agreed. "He has a maturity that doesn't match his age," the Chinese is believed to have opined.

It's something he has added to an already imposing arsenal over the last few years. Back when he was a kid, he used to have a tough time dealing with losses. At the Olympiad in 2022, the teen broke down after an agonising endgame loss to Nodirbek Abdusattorov in the 10th round. Following that loss, Viswanathan Anand had paid him a visit. "If I'm going to kill myself," he had told himself after that defeat, "I am going to do it after the last round."

Since August 2022, apart from maturing in terms of dealing with pressure (there was a phase in 2023 when he struggled with his own lofty expectations), he has also grown as a player. He has added more variations and expanded his opening work. Many believe that by the turn of the decade, Indian players could dominate the game's top table. Gukesh can kickstart it if he can become the youngest world champion.

NEWSMAKER

Jolt to Soren as court turns down plea for attending funeral of uncle

MUKESH RANJAN @ Ranchi

THE Special PMLA Court in Ranchi on Saturday refused to grant interim bail to former Jharkhand Chief Minister **Hemant Soren**, an accused in a money laundering case linked to a land scam.

Soren had filed an application seeking 13-day interim bail to attend his uncle's funeral, but the court rejected his plea. Notably, Rajaram Soren -- elder brother of JMM patriarch Shibu Soren – passed away this morning after a prolonged illness.

After being questioned for over seven hours, Soren was arrested by the Enforcement Directorate (ED) on January 31 from his residence and is currently under judicial custody. He is lodged in Birsa Munda Central Jail in Ranchi.

On April 24, Soren moved the Supreme Court against the delay in issuing its order on his petition by Jharkhand High Court. The CM was arrested on January 31 after he resigned from the post.

In his petition, Soren has argued that the Jharkhand High Court reserved its decision on February 28 against his plea challenging his arrest by the ED. Even after 55 days, the court has not yet pronounced its judgment, forcing him to seek refuge in the top court. Citing the unprecedented delay in the High Court order, Soren has also sought interim bail from the Supreme Court.

Land scam cases

The ED has provisionally attached tainted land parcels worth ₹266 crore (Commercial Value). It has arrested 22 accused persons, including former Soren, IAS officer Chhavi Ranjan, Bhanu Pratap Prasad (Revenue Sub-Inspector), Amit Kumar Agarwal, and Prem Prakash. Three prosecution complaints have been filed in the cases of land scams presently under investigation in the state.

The ED is probing the alleged "huge amounts of proceeds of crime generated by manipulation of official records by showing dummy sellers and purchasers in the guise of forged/bogus documents to acquire huge parcels of land having value in crores".

Meanwhile, the probe agency has provisionally attached tainted land parcels worth ₹266 crore (Commercial Value). It has arrested 22 accused persons, including former Soren, IAS officer Chhavi Ranjan, Bhanu Pratap Prasad (Revenue Sub-Inspector), Amit Kumar Agarwal, and Prem Prakash.

According to the ED, three prosecution complaints have been filed in the cases of land scams presently under investigation in the state. The ED is investigating the Ranchi land scam case based on the documents recovered from Bhanu Pratap's house, one of the key accused in the land scam case.

According to the agency, several important documents related to land were found during the raid from the house of Sub-Inspector Bhanu Pratap Prasad of Badagain zone.

2 CRPF jawans killed as militants attack camp of security forces in Manipur

PRASANTA MAZUMDAR @ Guwahati

TWO Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) personnel were killed and many were injured as suspected militants attacked a camp of security forces in Manipur's Bishnupur district in the early hours of Saturday, police said.

The attack took place at the CRPF's 128th battalion camp at Naranseina in Meitei-majority Bishnupur district in the Imphal Valley.

Sub-inspector Nizamuddin Sarkar from Assam's Kokrajhar district and head constable Arup Saini from West Bengal's Bankura district lost their lives whereas inspector Jadav Das and constable Aftab Das were injured.

The police said the attack was carried out by suspected Kuki militants and their supporters. "At around 12.45 am, we received information that a group of suspected Kuki militants and their supporters, who were armed with sophisticated weapons and bombs, fired upon the CRPF personnel deployed on the western side of 2nd India Reserve Battalion headquarters at Naranseina Mnaing. The security personnel retaliated and the firing lasted for about 40-50 minutes," a police officer wrote to the district magistrate in an internal communication.

According to the officer, four personnel were injured in the attack and later, two succumbed to their injuries. The Indigenous Tribal Leaders' Forum, which has been the voice of the Kuki-Zo tribals during the ethnic conflict, claimed the Meitei militants carried out the attack.

"The ITLF condemns the attack on Kuki-Zo areas near Khoirentak in Bishnupur district. Kuki-Zo tribals have always appreciated the presence of central security forces and we have lauded their efforts in protecting the lives of civilians," the ITLF said.

Meanwhile, a Meitei village volunteer was killed during a gunfight between two groups at Sinam Kom in Imphal East district on Friday evening.

Indigenously-built Vande Metro trial run to begin from July, say officials

RAJESH KUMAR THAKUR @ New Delhi

INDIAN Railways will launch indigenously designed and developed Vande Metro trains and run more Amrit Bharat trains, officials aware of the matter said on Saturday.

"The Vande Metro train will have a very swift run between one major city to another covering a shorter distance of nearly 100 to 150 kms. Designed on the concept of European regional train, the first new train set of Vande Metro is likely to roll out from the railway manufacturing unit by July this year for test run on a selected route," an official of the railway ministry said, wishing not to be named.

Non-AC high-speed Amrit Bharat passenger trains will run from one state to another covering a longer distance of over 1,000 kms. "Orders for the manufacture of 50 Amrit Bharat trains, out of a target of running at least 400 in next few years, have been placed with the manufacturing units concerned," a senior railway ministry official said.

"The Vande Metro train has been designed in such a way that it would bring a new kind of revolution in metro journey because of its technically advanced swift acceleration-driven movement and comfortable accommodating facilities form one city to another situated within a distance of 100 to 250 kms," the official said.

"The first train set of Vande Metro, akin to the European concept of regional rail connectivity, will cater to intercity passenger services covering a distance of 100 to 250 kms at the maximum speed of 120-130 kmph," the official said.

The prototype of first Vande Metro train set will have initially 12 air-conditioned coaches. "After successful test run of Vande Metro train, the ministry will run more such trains in its 100 days of action plan from July this year onwards," the official said.

The ministry is also planning to roll out 1,000 Vande sleeper trains in next 5 years connecting all cities, he said.

Presently two sets of Amrit Bharat trains, connecting Darbhanga-Ayodhya-Anand Vihar terminal and Malda -Sir M Visvesvaraya Terminus (Bengaluru), are operational.

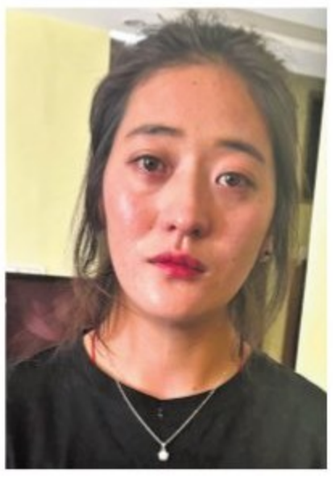
24-year-old's great escape from Tibet to India

YESHI SELI @ Dharamshala

A year ago, **Namkyi** left her home in Charo village, Tibet, embarking on a ten-day journey with her aunt Tsering Kyi, traversing both day and night until they crossed into Nepal and eventually reached India. Now 24 years old, Namkyi recounts her harrowing experience of being imprisoned for a year by Chinese authorities.

They had apprehended her and her sister while peacefully protesting against the denial of their religious practices. She was a mere 15 years old at the time and endured over a year in solitary confinement.

"I left my family behind to tell the world about the harsh realities we face in Tibet. Human rights violations occur with impunity, and we are constantly viewed with suspicion and disdain. The memories of my days in jail haunt me; at 15, we were subjected to physical abuse by uniformed men, given meagre leftovers for sustenance, and slept in the cold with thin blankets, with no one to turn to for help. Though I was eventually released after a trial, it was under the shadow of threats and warnings," said a tearful Namkyi in an interview with this newspaper.



'Forced to undergo military training'

Both Namkyi and her sister were detained in Tashi Gyalkaling County on charges of "separatist acts against the nation" and supporting the "Dalai clique." "While in prison, we were forced to undergo military training and study the Chinese constitution. Additionally, we were assigned to labour camps where we manufactured copper wires, cigarette boxes, and watches. Even after serving our prison terms, we were held at a police station in Pema Lhathang, Ngaba County, for a week," she said.

Both Namkyi and her sister were detained in Tashi Gyalkaling County on charges of "separatist acts against the nation" and supporting the "Dalai clique."

"While in prison, we were forced to undergo military training and study the Chinese constitution. Additionally, we were assigned to labour camps where we manufactured copper wires, cigarette boxes, and watches. Even after serving our prison terms, we were held at a police station in Pema Lhathang, Ngaba County, for a week. My family has been under constant scrutiny ever since," she added, expressing fears of their potential torture. Namkyi arrived in India in June 2023 and has since been attending a transit school to learn the local language, as her dialect differs from that spoken by Tibetan exiles in India.

Shortly after reaching Dharamshala, she was granted an audience with His Holiness the Dalai Lama, an experience she describes as immensely healing. "His Holiness emphasized the importance of preserving our culture and traditions," she remarked.

While Namkyi has endured significant hardship, her story mirrors that of thousands of Tibetan refugees who have risked perilous journeys to flee Tibet. She hopes to travel the world and raise awareness of the severe human rights violations in China, holding onto the belief that justice will one day prevail.

INDIA	Max	Min		Max	Min
Ahmedabad	39	26	Mumbai	34	28
Bhopal	36	24	Panaji	33	26
Jaipur	38	26	Patna	43	28
Amritsar	36	22	Lucknow	42	27
Chennai	35	28	Port Blair	33	27
Kolkata	41	29	Imphal	31	19
Srinagar	21	11	Chandigarh	38	23

■ 25 SEATS IN GUJARAT WILL GO TO POLLS IN THE THIRD PHASE ON MAY 7 ■ BJP HAS ALREADY WON SURAT SEAT UNOPPOSED

Shah thanks Gujaratis for BJP's win in Surat

DILIP SINGH KSHATRIYA @Ahmedabad

UNION Home Minister Amit Shah said on Saturday that the BJP has secured its first victory in the Lok Sabha elections from the Surat constituency even before the counting of votes, attributing it to the "foresightedness" of the people of Gujarat.

"In 2014 and 2019, the wonderful people of Gujarat endorsed Narendra Modi's leadership by giving all 26 Lok Sabha seats to the BJP. This time taking it a step further, even before the counting, people have ensured that the account has already been opened in Surat... Now, a hat-trick awaits in the remaining 25 seats, and representatives in the name of Narendra Modi will be sent to Parliament," Shah said at an election rally at Jamkandorna in Rajkot district.

BJP's Surat nominee Mukesh Dalal was elected unopposed after Congress candidate Nilesh Kumbhani's nomination was rejected for allegedly forging the signatures of his proposers, and others withdrew from the fray. Shah expressed the confidence that the BJP is leading in the seats that went to polls in two phases on April 19 and 26. "Two phases have been completed. Do you want to know the results? Will you keep it a secret? Do not tell it to anyone... After two phases, it is now clear that Rahul Gandhi is finished. From east to west and north to south, there is only one resounding sound...that of Modi, Modi, Modi. The whole country has decided to make Narendra Modi Prime Minister for the third term," Shah said while campaigning for BJP candidate Mansukh Mandaviya in Porbandar constituency.

Taking a jibe at Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge, the BJP leader said, "Congress president Kharge says, 'what have people of Gujarat and Rajasthan got to do with Kashmir'. I want to tell him, 'Kharge saheb, you are over 80 years old, but you still haven't grasped the essence of our nation'. Every youth in Jamkandorna is prepared to sacrifice their lives for Kashmir... You tell me, shouldn't Article 370 have been abrogated?"

Shah criticised the Congress for deviating from the Ram mandir issue during its 70 years of governance, attributing it to "vote bank politics". He said, "For over 500 years, our Lord Ram remained confined to a tent in an unknown area. Modiji, after 500 years, restored the pride of Lord Ram by constructing a magnificent Ram mandir."

Lauding the economic achievements of the BJP government, the Union minister said, "Congress had left the country in the 11th position among the world economies. It is Modiji who has elevated it to number 5. I guarantee you that if you elect Modi as PM for the third time, he will propel the country to become the world's third-largest economy."

MARK THE NUMBERS

BJP had owned all 26 Lok Sabha seats in the state in 2014 and 2019 elections

TOTAL VOTERS **4.92 CRORE**
THIRD GENDER **1,503**
MALE **2.54 CRORE**
1st TIME VOTERS **11.32 LAKH**
FEMALE **2.39 CRORE**
CENTENARIANS **10,322**

This phase will include constituencies
Kutch • Banaskantha • Patan • Mehsana • Sabarkantha • Gandhinagar • Ahmedabad East • Ahmedabad West • Surendranagar • Rajkot • Porbandar • Jamnagar • Junagadh • Amreli • Bhavnagar • Anand • Kheda • Panchmahal • Dahod • Vadodara • Chhota Udaipur • Bharuch • Bardoli • Navsari • Valsad

ONE POLLING BOOTH IN EACH ASSEMBLY SEAT WILL BE MANAGED BY DIFFERENTLY-ABLED INDIVIDUALS, WHILE ONE WILL BE MANAGED BY A YOUNG PERSON IN EACH DISTRICT
GUJARAT

87,042 ballot units (BUs), **71,682 control units** (CUs) of EVMs and voter verifiable paper audit trail (VVPAT) machines will be used across **29,568 polling stations** in the state

Over **1.2 lakh police** personnel will be posted in the state during the elections. The Election Commission will also deploy **4.5 lakh** personnel, including state and central government employees

1,274 polling booths or seven booths per **182 Assembly seats** in Gujarat will be managed by women officials

Priyanka lands in state for the 1st time in 5 yrs

DILIP SINGH KSHATRIYA @Ahmedabad

AHEAD of the third phase of the Lok Sabha polls on May 7, Congress leader Priyanka Gandhi on Saturday kick started her election campaign in Gujarat's Valsad by criticizing Prime Minister Narendra Modi's policies while referring to him as 'Gyani uncle'. She was addressing a public gathering in Valsad's Dharampur town. This marks Priyanka Gandhi's first visit to Gujarat after five years.

The last visit of a Gandhi family member to this area was by Rahul Gandhi during the Bharat Jodo yatra in 2022 before the state Assembly polls. She tore into Prime Minister Narendra Modi accusing him of spreading "misinformation and neglecting the welfare of ordinary citizens". Also, the Congress leader highlighted the pressing issues the people were facing from pension schemes to women's empowerment.

During her address, Gandhi targeted Modi's governance style and election strategies likening him to an authoritative figure imparting wisdom at a wedding ceremony.

She questioned the validity of the PM's statements, specifically his contentious comments regarding Congress' alleged plans to confiscate gold from households using x-ray machines. "The Gyaani Uncle is in a position of authority and yet he is spouting 'bakwas' (nonsense)," Gandhi remarked, raising doubts about the practicality and ethics of such assertions.

"The Gyaani Uncle is in a position of authority, yet his words are far from meaningful," remarked Priyanka Gandhi.

She also asserted that the PM's statements are filled with absurdity, as if he expects people to blindly accept them as undeniable truth. "We have been in power for 55 years. Can any government actually enforce a scheme where an x-ray machine scans the amount of jewellery in your house and forcibly takes it away from you? Is it possible?" She asked, "Do you trust this Gyani uncle?" Can we rely on anything that comes out of this uncle's mouth when he addresses the public? Is he truly the Prime Minister of this country?" Voicing her concerns regarding the Modi government's approach to addressing sexual harassment and violence against women, the Congress leader cited incidents such as the Hathras case and the reported harassment of women wrestlers by a BJP MP.

Priyanka also accused the PM of undermining democracy, stating, "Prime Minister Narendra Modi is weakening democracy and targeting the opposition. He accuses us of corruption while portraying himself as the sole epitome of purity. Modi has amassed immense wealth and wields boundless power, aided by an extensive network of influence and a vast media empire.

1,000 Sikhs join BJP in Delhi, Nadda hails Modi's unity initiatives

BJP supporters during joining of the party by some new leaders, at the party headquarters, in New Delhi | SHEKHAR YADAV

RAJESH KUMAR THAKUR @New Delhi

OVER 1,000 influential personalities belonging to the Sikh community, including members of Delhi Sikh Gurdwara Management Committee, joined the BJP on Saturday in the presence of BJP chief JP Nadda.

Welcoming them at the party headquarters, Nadda said the party was honoured to welcome the community members. "The BJP is the only party through which we can advance the unity, integrity and security of the country", Nadda said.

Highlighting a slew of initiatives taken by the Modi government to help the minority community, Nadda said that if anybody has really worked for the community, it is Prime Minister Modi. Nadda reiterated the party's commitment towards Sikh community and said that the Sikhs have played a key role in the national building.

Nadda cited some government decisions such as the opening of the Kartarpur Sahib corridor, and FCRA (Foreign Contribution Regulation Act) registration for donations to the Golden Temple. He also cited the Central government's action against the accused in the 1984 anti-Sikh riot cases.

In an apparent reference to Congress, Nadda said while other parties have made promises and offered inducements to gain the support of the Sikh community, it was only Modi, who has worked for the welfare and development of the community.

"The BJP has always been honouring the contribution and sacrifices of the community for the country. It is well known to all that the BJP has strongly and continuously promoted the unity, integrity and security of the nation with the Sikh community's role in the nation building and country's integrity and unity together", he asserted.

Speaking at the event, BJP leader Manjinder Singh Sirsa said that the community members were supporting PM Modi because on one side, there's a horrifying 55-year-long period when Sikhs were labeled as terrorists and on the other side there is PM Modi's governance where those responsible for the Sikh massacres were put in jail.

Suuport initiatives taken by Modi govt

BJP leader Manjinder Singh Sirsa said that the community members were supporting PM Modi because on one side, there's a horrifying 55-year-long period when Sikhs were labeled as terrorists and on the other side there is PM Modi's governance where those responsible for the Sikh massacres were put in jail. BJP chief JP Nadda said only Modi, who has worked for the welfare and development of the community.

Tejashwi says BJP leaders in 'depression', stokes row

RAMASHANKAR @ Patna

THE ongoing war of words between the BJP and RJD heated up on Saturday when Bihar's former deputy chief minister Tejashwi Prasad said that BJP leaders were in a state of depression after the second phase of Lok Sabha elections in the state.

Taking a dig at Prime Minister Narendra Modi's two back-to-back rallies in Bihar on Friday, Tejashwi told the media that farmers, youth, women, students, businessmen and employees had come to know that it was difficult to get jobs and the problem of unemployment would not be solved if Modi was at the helm.

He also said that prices of various commodities would not be checked and people's issues would not be discussed if Modi continued to hold the PM post.

The RJD leader said there would also be difficulty in discussing issues such as the availability of schools and hospitals, and that farmers' income would also not double till Modi remained in power.

He said that PM Modi did not discuss the achievements made by his government and also the work done by 39 NDA Lok Sabha members from Bihar in the last 10 years. "What will he discuss – he has no achievement," he contended.

RJD leader alleged that Modi had misled people so much that now "Modi ji has spoken so many lies that now he has nothing left to speak about". "The PM is running away from issues," he said.

Bihar deputy chief minister and senior BJP leader Vijay Kumar Sinha targeted Tejashwi for his comment against the PM by calling him 'Shehzada of Bihar'.

The senior BJP leader also attacked Congress leader Rahul Gandhi by calling him 'Shehzada of the country'.

"Both leaders only read scripts written by others who charge crores of rupees from them," Sinha said. Sharpening his attack on Tejashwi, he said the RJD leader was only following scripts given to him as he did not speak or think beyond what was written in them.

"The People of Bihar have seen how far Tejashwi could go in misleading them through his big talk. Now, they want to get rid of him," he added.Recently, Bihar witnessed the second phase of polling on Friday where five constituencies go to the polls.

CBI raided empty house: Didi

The TMC has lodged a complaint with the Election Commission stating that the CBI had "deliberately carried out an unscrupulous" raid at an "empty location" at Sandeshkhali to tarnish the party's image, said Bengal CM Mamata Banerjee. The CBI seized arms and ammunition during searches at two premises of an associate of now-suspended TMC leader Sheikh Shahjahan in Sandeshkhali.

More RPF jawans at booths

Expenditure observers for the Election Commission in Thane district on Saturday directed officials to deploy more RPF personnel at railway stations to check the transport of huge cash in trains. In a meeting, they took stock of the election work in all three Lok Sabha constituencies -Thane, Bhiwandi, and Kalyan- in the district which will vote on May 20, as per an official release.

Farmers protest against BJP nominee

A group of farmers on Saturday protested against the BJP's Ambala candidate Banto Kataria during her Lok Sabha polls campaign in the Naggal village. The protesters asked Kataria why the farmers marching towards Delhi to seek a legal guarantee on minimum support price for crops were not allowed to proceed to the national capital and press for their demands. Bharatiya Kisan Union leader asked why barricades were erected at the Shambhu border

MAHARASHTRA

Ujjwal Nikam BJP candidate from Mumbai North Central

SUDHIR SURYAWANSHI @Mumbai

THE BJP has put forward a prominent legal figure, Ujjwal Nikam, as its candidate for the Mumbai North Central Lok Sabha seat, in opposition to Congress candidate Varsha Gaikwad. This decision comes as the party opted not to nominate incumbent MP Poonam Mahajan. Nikam, known for his role as a public prosecutor, emerged as the BJP's choice for his educated background and high profile within the Marathi community.

The Mumbai North Central constituency, previously represented by notable figures like the late Sunil Dutt and Poonam Mahajan, holds significance in both political and cultural realms. Despite BJP president Ashish Shelar's initial reluctance to contest, Nikam's nomination prompted him to rally support, expressing confidence in Nikam's ability to represent Mumbai's interests effectively.

Nikam's legal prowess, particularly his involvement in high-profile cases such as the 1993 Mumbai bombings and the 26/11 terrorist attacks, has earned him recognition.

However, his credibility was called into question regarding claims made during the 26/11 trial, as debunked by former top cop Meeran Borwankar's account.

Politically key area

Previously represented by notable figures, Mumbai North Central constituency holds significance in both political and cultural realms.

WEST BENGAL

Mamata falls while trying to board a chopper in Durgapur

Flew to Kulti

Mamata Banerjee flew to Kulti and addressed the rally in support of TMC's Asansol candidate and veteran actor Shatrughan Sinha

SULGANA SENGUPTA @Kolkata

WEST Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee lost her balance and fell while attempting to board a chopper in Durgapur, West Burdwan district, on Saturday.

CM Banerjee slipped and fell while trying to take a seat on her helicopter. Her security personnel at the scene assisted her to her seat. The Trinamool chief reportedly suffered a minor injury, but was still able to proceed with her journey to Asansol.

Mamata Banerjee was en route to Kulti for an election rally when the incident occurred. "The CM fell inside the helicopter after losing her balance while trying to sit. She is fine," a senior officer accompanying Banerjee said.

Following the incident, she flew to Kulti and addressed the rally in support of TMC's Asansol candidate and veteran Bollywood actor Shatrughan Sinha. Just about a month ago, on March 14, Banerjee, 69, had sustained serious injuries to her forehead after falling at her home in Kalighat, Kolkata.

Banerjee has suffered injuried quite often. Ealier in March, the chief minister was injured when she had a gash on her forehead. She had also suffered a leg injury in Spain in the year 2023.

ONE

climber is dead after falling down a steep gorge in Alaska's Denali National Park

GLOBAL WEATHER

LR: Light Rain • WI: Windy • HR: Heavy Rain • SN: Snow • TDS: Thundershower • LC: Light Cloud • SNY: Sunny

Beijing	19	10	SNY	Los Angeles	23	13	LC
Colombo	33	27	SNY	Melbourne	16	9	SNY
Dhaka	39	29	SNY	Moscow	17	6	LC
Dubai	37	27	SNY	New York	16	10	SNY
Houston	27	23	LC	Singapore	32	28	LR
Istanbul	17	14	LC	Toronto	18	9	LC
London	11	6	LR	Washington	31	18	SNY

Hamas weighs latest Israeli ceasefire offer

Comes as Egyptian mediators wrap up visit to Israel; a deal will avert planned Israeli ground offensive into southern Gaza's Rafah for now

GAZA STRIP

HAMAS said on Saturday that it was reviewing a new Israeli proposal for a cease-fire in Gaza, as Egypt intensified efforts to broker a deal to end the months-long war and stave off a planned Israeli ground offensive into Rafah. Senior Hamas official Khalil al-Hayya gave no details of Israel's offer, but said it was in response to a proposal from Hamas two weeks ago. Negotiations earlier this month centred on a six-week cease-fire proposal and the release of 40 civilian and sick hostages in exchange for freeing Palestinian prisoners in Israeli jails.

Hamas' statement came hours after a high-level Egyptian delegation wrapped up a visit to Israel where it discussed a "new vision" for a prolonged cease-fire in Gaza, according to an Egyptian official, who spoke on condition of anonymity to freely discuss the developments. It wasn't immediately clear whether Israel's new proposal was directly related to Friday's visit by Egyptian mediators.

The discussions between Egyptian and Israeli officials focused on the first stage of a multi-phase plan that would include a limited exchange of hostages held by Hamas for Palestinian prisoners, and the return of a significant number of displaced Palestinians to their homes in northern Gaza "with minimum restrictions," the Egyptian official said.

The mediators are working on a compromise that will answer most of both parties' main demands, which could pave the way to continued negotiations with the goal of a larger deal to end the war, the official said.

There has been growing international pressure for Hamas and Israel to reach an agreement on a cease-fire and avert a possible Israeli attack on Rafah, where more than half of Gaza's 2.3 million people have sought refuge after fleeing fighting elsewhere in the territory.

Israel has been insisting for months it plans a ground offensive into Rafah, on the border with Egypt, where it says many remaining Hamas militants are holed up, despite calls for restraint from the international community including Israel's staunchest ally, the US.

Egypt has cautioned an offensive into Rafah could have "catastrophic consequences" on the humanitarian situation in Gaza, where famine is feared, as well as on regional peace and security. *AP*

Palestinian children stand amid the debris of a house destroyed by overnight Israeli bombardment in Rafah in the southern Gaza Strip on Saturday | AFP

WAR WATCH

ISRAEL-GAZA: DAY 204

TOLL SO FAR

36,016

UN probes staffers over Hamas links

UN investigators are looking into allegations against 14 of the 19 staffers from the UN relief agency for Palestinians who Israel claims were involved in the October 7 attack by Hamas militants that spurred the latest war in Gaza, a spokesman said Friday. The UN's internal watchdog the Office of Internal Oversight Services is carrying out the probe following Israel's initial allegations in January

UK weighs deploying troops in Gaza to help deliver humanitarian aid

LONDON

BRITISH troops may be tasked with delivering aid to Gaza from an offshore pier now under construction by the US military, the BBC reported on Saturday. British government officials declined to comment on the report.

According to the BBC, the British government is considering deploying troops to drive the trucks that will carry aid from the pier along a floating causeway to the shore.

No decision has been made and the proposal hasn't yet reached Prime Minister Rishi Sunak, the BBC reported, citing unidentified government sources.

The report comes after a senior US military official said on Thursday that there would be no American 'boots on the ground' and another nation would provide the personnel to drive the delivery trucks to the shore. The official, who spoke to reporters on condition of anonymity to discuss details not yet made public, declined to identify the third party.

Britain is already providing logistical support for construction of the pier, including a Royal Navy ship that will house hundreds of US soldiers and sailors working on the project.

In addition, British military planners have been embedded at US Central Command in Florida and in Cyprus, where aid will be screened before shipment to Gaza, for several weeks, the UK Ministry of Defence said on Friday.

The UK Hydrographic Office has also shared analysis of the Gaza shoreline with the US to aid in construction of the pier. *AP*

MID-AIR SCARE

Emergency slide falls off Delta Air Lines' Boeing 767 jet

NEW YORK

AN emergency slide fell off a Delta Air Lines jetliner shortly after takeoff Friday from New York, and pilots who felt a vibration in the plane circled back to land safely at New York's John F Kennedy International Airport.

Delta said that after takeoff the pilots got an alert about the emergency slide on the plane's right side and heard an unusual sound coming from that area of the Boeing 767 jet, which is listed as having been manufactured in 1990. The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) said the crew reported a vibration.

Pilots declared an emergency so the flight could be be routed quickly back to the airport, and the plane landed and taxied to a gate under its own power, according to the airline.

There were 176 passengers, two pilots and five flight attendants on board the flight, which was scheduled to fly to Los Angeles. *AP*

EXPRESS READ

Indian jailed for 16 yrs in UK for attempted murder

London: A 25-year-old Indian man charged with attempted murder of a female student, also an Indian, in east London two years ago has been sentenced to 16 years' imprisonment by a court here. Sriram Ambarla, who was arrested at the scene of stabbing inside a Hyderabadi restaurant in east London, pleaded guilty at the Old Bailey court on Thursday. According to a court report in *MyLondon*, they both came to study at the University of East London in 2022 where Ambarla pursued her and resorted to physical threats before the attack in March that year. The unnamed victim, a student from Kerala in her 20s, who was working part-time as a waitress in east London has since completed her Master's course.

THE NEW INDIAN EXPRESS

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PUBLIC NOTICE

The General Public are hereby notified and informed that, my client K.K. Anand S/o Krishnan had **misplaced the sale deed dated 28.03.2006 vide document No. BAS-1-21458/2005-06 Book-I stored in CD No. BASD231 registered on 31.03.2006** in respect of the schedule property purchased by my client's parents namely K.S. Krishnan and Rajie Krishnan from Liny Roy, while in transit. Any person/s in contact of the same or found they may kindly return the same to my client or the below mentioned address. In this regard my client also lodged a police complaint in respect of the lost document through online which has registered as Lost Report No.1029625/2024, on 27/04/2024

SCHEDULE PROPERTY:

All that piece and parcel of the super built up area of 892 square feet in Kristal Olivine Apartment at the Ground Floor bearing apartment No.G24 along with one covered car parking in basement and also undivided share right, title and interest of 480.35 square feet of land property out of total extent of 69151.5 square feet in survey No.89/1 and 89/2, situated at Bellandur Village, Varthur Hobli, Bangalore South Taluk and bounded on :- East by : Flat No.G25, West by : Passage & Private Property, North by : Passage and Private Property, south by : Flat No.G23.

ARAVIND KUMAR, Advocate
No.636, 14th Cross, 6th Main, 2nd Phase, J.P. Nagar, Bengaluru - 560 078.
Date : 27.04.2024

PUBLIC NOTICE

This is to notify the General Public that my client **Sri.H.R.ASHOK,** S/o Late B.G.Ramaanjani, is intending to purchase a property fully described in the schedule hereunder from the owner, **Sri. G. NAGARAJ SA,** S/o Late G.Gopal, Represented by his GPA holder **Sri.G.RAJENDRA REDDY.**

Any person having any kind of right, interest or claim may lodge their objections in writing with documentary proof within 10 days to the undersigned from the date of publication of this notice. If any kind of Objection is not received, my client will proceed to purchase the schedule property in accordance with law. Any claim received thereafter will not be entertained or considered.

SCHEDULE PROPERTY

All that part and parcel of the vacant site bearing BDA Site No.214, Khata No.BDA/RO(S)/214/AP4/2007-08, situated at Anjanapura Layout, 4th Block, Bangalore, measuring East to West 6 Meters, North to South 9 Meters, totally 54 Square Meters, together with all rights, easements, privileges, appurtenances whether underneath or above the surface, bounded on the:

East by : Site No.213
West by : Site No.215
North by : Road
South by : Site No.237

D. SRINIVASA, Advocate,
No.13, 3rd Cross, Journalist Colony, Bangalore-560002 Mobile: 9886047740
Bangalore, Date: 27-04-2024

PUBLIC NOTICE

This is to inform the General Public that my client **Mr. ZAHEER** Son of Late Ameer Khan, is desirous to purchase the under mentioned Schedule Property from its present owner Mrs. AYESHA SULTANA, Aged about 45 Years, Wife of Mr. Noorulla Sharif, which she has acquired/purchased the same from Smt. Dhanalakshmi.M, Arun Kumar, Deepak.C and Shobha, vide under Absolute Sale Deed dated: 15-06-2023, Registered as document no. BTM-1-02210-2023-24, Book-1, Registered in the office of the Sub-Registrar BTM Layout, Bangalore.

Any body claiming any manner of right, title, claim, lien or interest in and over the Schedule Property and having any objection for the said Sale transaction or claim/s of any nature in respect of the under mentioned Schedule Property shall write to the undersigned along with the documentary proof, within 15 days from the date of this Publication. Non receipt of objection/s within the said period my client deems and presumes that there is no objections or claims from any person/s, and he shall proceed to complete the Sale Transaction and objections if any received thereafter shall not be binding upon my clients.

"SCHEDULE OF THE PROPERTY"

All that Piece and Parcel of immovable Property "EASTERN PORTION" of bearing Site No. 1, Khatha No. 64, Old No. 64, BBMP Khatha Municipal No. 82, BBMP PID No. 64-172-82. Situated at "THAVAREKERE VILLAGE", Begur Hobli Bangalore South Taluk, Suddagunte Palya, Old division No. 35/58. Presently Property Comes within the Limits of BBMP old Ward- 64, Present New BBMP Ward No. 171, Thavarekere Main Road, Gurrappanapalya now also called as Krishnappa Garden, Bangalore, Measuring : East to West : 20 Feet and North to South : 40 Feet, in all Totally Measuring : 800 Square feets, along with existing residential house thereon, and bounded on : **East by :** Private Property, **West by :** Remaining Portion of Site No. 1, **North by :** Road, & **South by :** Site No.2.

Sd/- **N.A. LAW ASSOCIATES**
Office at No: 1/1, 10th Main, 13th Cross, Wilson Garden, Bangalore-560030.
(M) 9845276445 / 9742944674,
Email: nalawassociates79@gmail.com

PUBLIC NOTICE

My client, **Sri.VASANTHA RAO.S, S/o.Sri.Siddoji Rao,** Aged about 37 years, R/at.Nandi Evershine Apartment, No.202A, 13th Main, Vinayaka Layout, Nagarabhavi 2nd Stage, Bangalore-560072 is intended to purchase the **vacant Property bearing Site No.528, Bhavani Nagar Layout, BBMP Khatha serial No.528, Old No.528, layout formed by the Railway Men'S House Building Co-Operative society Limited in Sy.Nos.66/1 to 8, 69, 71, 81/1, 2, 4, 5, 87/4 to 20, 88/1 to 14, 88/16 to 21, measuring East to West:60 feet and North to South:40 feet, totally measuring 2400 Sq feet, situated at Mallathahalli Village, Ward No.129, Yeshawanthapura Hobli, Bangalore North Taluk, Bangalore, bounded on East By:Site bearing No.549, West By: Road, North By:Site bearing No.529 and South By: Site Bearing No.527 from Sri.H.S.RAJENDRA KUMAR**, S/o.Late. H.Siddappa, Aged about 57 years, R/at.No.51312, Prestige Falcon City Apartment, Konanakunte Cross, Doddakallasandra, Bangalore-560062, in this regard my client has also entered into a registered agreement of sale Dated:22-04-2024 with the above said Sri.H.S.Rajendra Kumar in respect of the above said property, if anybody have any claims, title, rights over this property, they shall file their objections with documents, before the undersigned within **10 days** from this notice. Failing which my client will proceeds further.

NARESH BABU.R.P, Advocate
R/at.33, 2nd Floor, Opp.10th Cross, Cubbonpet Main Road, Bangalore-560002.
CONTACT : 9538261850 / 9986072065

CLASSIFIEDS

REAL ESTATE

FOR SALE

FLAT FOR RESALE

3 BHK flat in prime location at Alkapoor Township Manikonda for resale at Rs. 5580 per sqft. **Only bank payment acceptable.**

Contact 98719 52061

PUBLIC NOTICE

The General Public is hereby informed that my client is intending to purchase the below mentioned schedule of property from its owner viz., **NR GREENWOOD HOTELS AND RESORTS PRIVATE LIMITED,** #396, 3rd Floor, KHM Block (Judges Colony), Ganganagar, Bengaluru- 560 032. If anybody is having any objection, claim, interest, dispute for the above intended sale transaction, he/she/they may contact the undersigned with the documentary proof substantiating his/her/their objections/claims/details of dispute/s within **Fourteen (14) days** from the date of this publication, failing which. my client will proceed to complete the sale transaction with the above owner as if there are no third party claims/objections/disputes in respect of the Schedule Property and thereafter no claims/objections/disputes will be entertained.

SCHEDULE OF PROPERTY

All that Piece and Parcel of House No.4, NR Greenwoods, measuring 1200 sqft carved out of converted land Bearing Old Sy. No 73, New Sy. No. 73/2, measuring 15,246 Sq. ft, situated at Muthugadahalli Village, Jala Hobli, previously Bangalore North Taluk, Presently Yelahanka Taluk, Bangalore which is Official memorandum bearing number: 16354, dated: 03/12/2019, by the Deputy Commissioner, Bangalore District, Bangalore and converted land Bearing Old Sy. No 73, New Sy. No. 73/3, measuring 14,157 Sq. ft, situated at Muthugadahalli Village, Jala Hobli, previously Bangalore North Taluk, Presently Yelahanka Taluk, Bangalore which is Official memorandum bearing number: 16355, dated: 03/12/2019, by the Deputy Commissioner, Bangalore District, Bangalore, and bounded on the: **EAST BY :** Site No.5, **WEST BY :** Site No.3, **NORTH BY:** 9mt Road, **SOUTH BY :** Site No.23.

AA ASSOCIATES & LEGAL CONSULTANTS
Chambers: No. 82-Z, Sunny Brooks, Sarjapura Road, Next to Wipro, Bengaluru-560035. (M) 8867010460, 8310306641

PUBLIC NOTICE

To whomsoever it may concern,
Our Client Ashwini Ananth Raj W/o. Ananth Raj, residing at No. 235, 4th Cross, Subbanapalya, Banaswadi Main Road, Bangalore submits that her name has been changed to C. Ashwini vide affidavit dated 25-04-2024 sworn before Notary Ganga Raju, Bangalore and accordingly the same shall be incorporated in all the Government Records in place of Ashwini Ananth Raj pertaining to her Identity to avoid ambiguity though the above said names Ashwini Ananth Raj and C. Ashwini refer to herself only in all respect.

JP & JP Law Firm,
14/1, Mountain Road, 1st Block, Jayanagar, Bangalore-560011.
Cont : Mob : 7760414171
Bangalore Date : 27.04.2024

PUBLIC NOTICE

OUR CLIENT" **SMT. SAKKU RAMAN,** W/o LATE KOSAL RAMAN, AGED ABOUT 74YRS,IS THE ABSOLUTE OWNER OF THE SITE NO-40 AND IN PHYSICAL POSSESSION AND MOREFULLY DESCRIBED IN THE SCHEDULE HEREUNDER OUR CLIENT SMT. SAKKU RAMAN REPRESENTED THAT ORIGINAL SALEDEED OF THE SCHEDULE PROPERTY REGISTERED AS DOCUMENT NO-KRI-1-31683-2004-05, CD-KRID-115 DATED:-18-02-2005 REGISTERED IN THE SUB-REGISTRAR OF KRISHNARAJPURAM BANGALORE, HAS BEEN LOST NEAR COMMERCIAL STREET ON 20.04.2024.HENCE OUR CLIENT LODGED A POLICE COMPLAIN ON 21.04.2024 REGARDING THE LOSS OF THE ORIGINAL SALE DEED. ANY PERSONS FINDINGTHE SAID ORIGINALS MAY PLEASE HAND OVER THE SAMEEITHER TO THE UNDERSIGNED OR TO THE OWNER.IF ANY PERSON CLAIMING ANY RIGHTS,TITLE OR INTEREST BASED ON THE SAID DEED SHOULD WRITE TO THE UNDERSIGNED WITHIN 7 DAYS OF THIS PUBLIC NOTICE.

SCHEDULE PROPERTY

ALL THAT PIECE AND PARCEL OF THE PROPERTY BEING THE RESIDENTIAL SITE NO-40 FT ,KHATA NO-607,MEASURING AN AREA OF 1600 SQFT(EAST 40 FT,WEST 40FT ,NORTH 40FT,SOUTH 40FT) IN"BRINDAVAN AVENUE"SITUATED AT HORAMAVU VILLAGE, KRISHNARAJAPURAM HOBLI,BANGALORE EAST TALUK AND BOUNDED ON THE: **EAST BY:** SITE NO.41, **WEST BY:** SITE NO.39, **NORTH BY:** PRIVATE ROAD, **SOUTH BY** :PRIVATE PROPERTY.

R. GEETHA, Advocate
No.44 veerapilai Street, 2ndParrallel to Commercial Street, Shivajinagar, Bangalore-560001. Mobile No:9844479617
Dated: 27-04-2024

PUBLIC NOTICE

Public are informed that my Client **Mr. NAGARAJ .K.G** S/o Sri.K.V.Govinda Shetty, is intending to purchase the below mentioned Schedule Property from its owners Smt.NAMITHA MOHAN RAJ & Kumari RANJITHA.M (both daughters of Late C.Mohan Raj & Late B.V .Gayathridevi). The owners have represented that , we are the absolute owners and lawful possession and enjoyment of the Schedule Property and we are free from all encumbrances and that apart from them there is no other person/s, Banks/Society/ firm or company who has got any right , title or interest over the Schedule Property and further represented that we have not entered into any Agreement of Sale, Mortgage, Hypothecation or created any third party rights or interest over the Schedule Property.

Notice is hereby given for the information of the General Public that if any person/s company/bank/society having any right, title, interest or claim against/ over the Schedule Property or any part of thereof by way of inheritance, mortgage, sale, conveyance, MOU, Agreement to Sell, GPA, transfer, lease deed, tenancy, license, lien, charge, trust, maintenance, easement, gift, exchange possession, adverse possession or otherwise howsoever are hereby required to submit the same in writing along with documentary proof to the undersigned at their office within **Ten (10) days** from the date of publication hereof. If no claim is received by the undersigned within the said period, it shall be presumed that no one has any right, title, interest or claim over the Schedule Property and my client would proceed to complete the sale transaction. If any claim/ s are received thereafter will not be considered and not binding on my client.

SCHEDULE PROPERTY

All that piece and parcel of the immovable property bearing House No.6:1-34, situated at GAVIPURA, 48th Division, Bangalore City, Presently comes under the jurisdiction of Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike, Revenue Department (South), Girinagara Sub-Division, Ward No.156-Srinagara, (Old Ward No.52-Hanumanthanagara) New Municipal No.882, (Old Municipal No.4/ 1) PID No.52- 85-882, situated at Yamuna Nadi Road, Brundavananagara, Srinagara, Bengaluru, measuring East to West:35-0 Feet, North to South:30-0 Feet, totally 1050 Square Feet, along with Shops and RCC roofed building and bounded on East by: Road, West by: Others Property, North by: Others, Property, South by: Property No.35.

Sd/- **UMASHANKAR.N,** Advocate
AKASH ASSOCIATES
#541/82/2, I Floor, OYO Lodge Building, 7th Main, Vijayanagar, Bangalore-560 040
E-mail: us.srsassociates@gmail.com
Off: 080-41500035 Mob: 9731278242
Date: 20-04-2024

STATE BANK OF INDIA
STRESSED ASSETS RECOVERY BRANCH
 # 11/90, 3rd Floor, Near Old Shivaji Theatre, J.C. Road, Bangalore-560002. Ph : 080-25943678/3663
Email Id: sbi.05173@sbi.co.in

POSSESSION NOTICE (For Immovable Property)

Whereas The under signed being the Authorised Officer of the **State Bank of India,** under the Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 (54 of 2002) ("Act") and in exercise of the powers conferred under section 13 (12) read with Rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 ("Rules") issued a Demand Notice dated **11.09.2023** calling upon the **borrower : (1) Smt. Shahida Begum,** W/o. Late Mohammed Anwar, Prop. M/s. Indoflex Rubber, **(2) Sri Waseem Anwar,** S/o. Late Mohammed Anwar, **(3) Smt. Aiman Zara,** D/o. Late Mohammed Anwar, **(4) Sri Mohammed Shahid** S/o. Late Mohammed Anwar, **All are residing at :** SHA House 205, Wheeler Road, M3 Manor Apartment, Opposite Building, Thomas Town, Bangalore-560084. **Also at :** No. 9, G.C. Colony, Queens Road, Shivajinagar, Bengaluru-560051. **Also at :** No. 349/1, Bharath Nagar, Saraipalya, Thanishandra, Bengaluru-560045. and **Personal Guarantor : Smt. Shahid Begum** W/o. Late Mohammed Anwar, **Prop. : M/s. Indoflex Rubber,** SHA House 205, Wheeler Road, M3 Manor Apartment, Opposite Building, Thomas Town, Bangalore-560084. **Also at :** No. 9, G.C. Colony, Queens Road, Shivajinagar, Bengaluru-560051. **Also at :** No. 349/1, Bharath Nagar, Saraipalya, Thanishandra, Bengaluru-560045 to repay the amount mentioned in the notice being **Rs. 41,84,318/-** (Rupees Forty One Lakh Eighty Four Thousands Three Hundred Eighteen only) as on 27.08.2023 and interest from 28.08.2023 and other charges and costs thereon swithin 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notice.

The borrower has failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the borrower/ guarantor/mortgagor and the public in general that the undersigned has taken possession of the property described herein below in exercise of powers conferred on him/her under section13 (4) of the said Act read with Rule 8 and 9 of the said rules on **24.04.2024.**

The borrower/guarantor/mortgagor in particular and the public in general are hereby cautioned not to deal with the property and any dealings with the property will be subject to the charge of the **State Bank of India** for an amount of **Rs. 49,21,623/-** (Rupees Forty Nine Lakh Twenty One Thousand Six Hundred Twenty Three only) as on 20.03.2024 and other charges and costs thereon till the date of realization of dues.

The borrower's attention is invited to provisions of sub-section (8) of section 13 of the Act, in respect of time available, to redeem the secured assets.

DESCRIPTION OF THE IMMOVABLE PROPERTY

Schedule A property : All that part and parcel of the Immovable house property bearing No. 47, Situated at Banaswadi Road Layout, Bangalore City Cooperation Division No. 74, Bangalore, measuring East : 26' (Twenty Six feet), West : 40$^{1}/_{2}$'(Forty and half feet), North : 42$^{1}/_{2}$ (Forty Two and Half feet) and South : 37$^{1}/_{2}$ (Thirty Seven and half feet), Standing in the name of Smt. Shahida Begam, W/o. Late Mohammed Anwar. **Bound : on the East by :** Smt. Byamma's Property, **On the West by :** Private Property, **on the North by :** Private Property, **On the South by :** Banaswadi Road.

Date : 24.04.2024 Sd/- **Authorised Officer**
Place : Bengaluru **SARB, J.C. Road, Bengaluru.**

TATA CAPITAL HOUSING FINANCE LIMITED
Contact Address: 11th Floor, Tower A, Peninsula Business Park, Senapati Bapat Marg, Lower Parel, Mumbai 400 013
Contact No. (022) 66069383. | **CIN No. U67190MH2008PLC187552**

DEMAND NOTICE

Under Section 13 (2) of the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 ("Act") read with Rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 ("Rules").

Whereas the undersigned being the Authorised Officer of Tata Capital Housing Finance Limited (TCHFL) under the Act and in exercise of powers conferred under Section 13 (12) read with Rule 3 of the Rules already issued detailed Demand Notice dated below under Section 13(2) of the Act, calling upon the Borrower(s)/Co-Borrower(s)/Guarantor(s) (all singularly or together referred to "Obligors")/Legal Heir(s)/Legal Representative(s) listed hereunder, to pay the amount mentioned in the respective Demand Notice, within 60 days from the date of the respective Notice, as per details given below. Copies of the said Notices are served by Registered Post A.D. and are available with the undersigned, and the said Obligor(s)/Legal Heir(s)/Legal Representative(s), may, if they so desire, collect the respective copy from the undersigned on any working day during normal office hours. In connection with the above, Notice is hereby given, once again, to the said Obligor(s) /Legal Heir(s)/Legal Representative(s) to pay to TCHFL, within 60 days from the date of the respective Notice/s, the amount indicated herein below against their respective names, together with further interest as detailed below from the respective dates mentioned below in column (d) till the date of payment and / or realisation, read with the loan agreement and other documents/writings, if any, executed by the said Obligor(s). As security for due repayment of the loan, the following Secured Asset(s) have been mortgaged to TCHFL by the said Obligor(s) respectively.

Loan Account No.	Name of Obligor(s)/ Legal Heir(s)/Legal Representative(s)	Total Outstanding Dues (Rs.) as on below date*	Date of Demand Notice and date of NPA
9763633	**Mr. Gopi Lahoti** (Borrower) and **Mrs. Sanchita Lahoti** (Co-Borrower)	Rs. 1,75,16,495 /- As on 24-04-2024	**24-04-2024 and 09-04-2019**

Property Description: SCHEDULE A PROPERTY All that piece and parcel of the immovable Property bearing converted Sy.No's. 163/3 & 163/2 (converted vide the order bearing No. ALN(EVH) SR.587/2011-12, dated 18.06.2012, converted vide the order bearing No. ALN(EVH) SR.5/2012-13, dated 18.06.2012, both the order passed by the Deputy Commissioner, Bangalore) totally measures about 2 Acres 19 Guntas., situated at Varthur village, earlier Bangalore South Taluk, presently Bangalore East Taluk, Bangalore and bounded on: East by: Land in Sy No. 162 belongs to V M Munithimmayya. West by: Road and Land in Sy No. 169 belongs to V M Muni Shamanna, North by: Land in Sy No. 98 belongs to Inamti Land of Sri. Chennarayaswamy Temple, South by: Land in Sy No. 163/2 belongs to Gaadi Chinnappa. **SCHEDULE 'B' PROPERTY** (Property hereby agreed to be sold to the purchaser) All that piece and parcel of the residential Row House bearing No. 07 (Seven) constructed under the project known as "COURTYARD" in all measuring 2119.221 Square feet of undivided Land Area (common areas), 120.87 Square feet of additional garden arena and 2291.05 square feet of built up area with all rights, appurtenances whatsoever hereunder of underneath or above the surface and bounded on; East by: Road, West by: Row House No. 8, North by: Road, South by: Row House No. 06.

*With further interest, additional Interest at the rate as more particularly stated in respective Demand Notices dated mentioned above, incidental expenses, costs, charges etc incurred till the date of payment and/or realization. If the said Obligor(s) shall fail to make payment to TCHFL as aforesaid, then TCHFL shall proceed against the above Secured Asset(s)/ Immovable Property (ies) under Section 13(4) of the said Act and the applicable Rules entirely at the risk of the said Obligor(s)/Legal Heir(s)/Legal Representative(s) as to the costs and consequences. The said Obligor(s)/Legal Heir(s)/Legal Representative(s) are prohibited under the said Act to transfer the aforesaid Secured Asset(s)/Immovable Property(ies), whether by way of sale, lease or otherwise without the prior written consent of TCHFL. Any person who contravenes or abets contravention of the provisions of the Act or Rules made thereunder shall be liable for imprisonment and/or penalty as provided under the Act.

Date: 28/04/2024 **For Tata Capital Housing Finance Limited**
Place: Bangalore **Sd/- Authorised Officer**

RAIL COACH FACTORY, KAPURTHALA

On-line bids are invited by PCMM, RCF on behalf of President of India for following items:-

S. No.	Tender No. and Due Date	Description	Quantity (Nos./Sets)	EMD (Rs.)
1.	17241186 24.05.2024	Set of Fabricated Assemblies for LHB LOW Noise Power Car	118 Sets	1,44,360/-
2.	17241130 17.05.2024	Set of Aluminium Floor End Profile for Antyodaya Coach	1047 Sets	3,51,490/-
3.	17241163 16.05.2024	Set of Air Grill for LHB Power Car Coaches	86 Set	2,09,660/-
4.	14241061 20.05.2024	Aluminium Coil	14094 Kgs.	88,260/-
5.	14241044 24.05.2024	Adhesion Promoting Primer	252516 Ltr.	15,62,870/-
6.	14241045 24.05.2024	Epoxy Based Elastified Top Coat (2 Components)	420225 Ltr.	18,74,370/-
7.	14241062 24.05.2024	PVC Flooring Roll	5066 Nos.	20,00,000/-
8.	17241174 23.05.2024	Air Inlet Duct for LHB AC2T	90 Nos.	5,74,270/-
		Air Inlet Duct for LHB AC3T	115 Nos.	
9.	17241148 20.05.2024	1) Exterior Stickers for LHB GS	1029 Sets	4,40,600/-
		2) Exterior Stickers for LHB SCN Coaches	566 Nos.	
		3) Exterior Stickers for LHB AC 3 Tier Coaches	482 Sets	
10.	02241077A 20.05.2024	Supply of Bellow Ducts Set-01 Set Consisting of 01	668 Sets	12,09,160/-
11.	02241258 28.05.2024	1. Set of ELEC Items for LHB SLRD Coaches	38 Sets	20,00,000/-
		2. Switch Board Cabinet for LHB AC Power Car 2x500 KVA DA Set	107 Sets	
12.	01241129 04.06.2024	Brake Beam	1235 Nos.	7,87,080/-
		Set of Tube	251 Sets	
13.	05241266 28.05.2024	Set of Console	547 Sets	1,38,770/-
14.	05241228 05.06.2024	Set of Door Cut Out	584 Sets	5,64,660/-
15.	05241270 03.06.2024	Set of Longitudinal Beam	20 Nos.	58,530/-
16.	05241271 30.05.2024	Set of Carline	145 Sets	1,58,750/-
17.	05241272 30.05.2024	Set of Carline for Chair Car	82 Sets	1,47,230/-
18.	05241286 10.06.2024	Louvre Frame	2519 Nos.	90,940/-
19.	01241138 23.05.2024	Safety Wire Rope Assly.	8885 Nos.	58,500/-
20.	01241142 22.05.2024	Plate Spring Dia 160xDia 82x 6 MM	9932 Nos.	56,020/-
21.	01241144 20.05.2024	Adjusting Shim for Body Support	17789 Nos.	51,220/-
22.	01241117 10.06.2024	Anti Roll Bar	1805 Nos.	2,40,000/-
23.	01241131 17.06.2024	Cross Section	1800 Nos.	3,71,150/-
24.	01241125 10.06.2024	Anti Roll Bar Fork	4373 Nos.	5,04,740/-
25.	01241137 27.05.2024	Set of Axle End Cover for LHB Bogies	1088 Sets	1,30,440/-
26.	01241162 03.06.2024	Set of Pins for LHB Bogies	1410 Sets	1,53,070/-

1. For details and making on-line bids, visit website **http://ireps.gov.in**. Drawings/specifications, wherever required can be downloaded from RCF website **http://www.rcf.indianrailways.gov.in**. Class III-b digital signature certificate required for on-line bidding, can be obtained from licensed certifying agencies listed at **http://www.cce.gov.in. 2.** Tenders will close at 14.25 Hrs. on due date and tenders will be opened at 14.30 hrs. Tender at Sl. No. 1 to 11 will be opened at RCF Kapurthala and Sl. No. 12 to 26 will be opened at Tilak Bridge, New Delhi. **3.** For queries, contact IREPS Helpdesk at 011-24102855, 011-24105180 or RCF helpdesk at 011-23378658.

Note: GST Number of RCF is 03AAAGM0289C1ZT. All the suppliers are advised to quote this in dispatch documents for the supplies made by them. **PCMM**

CORRIGENDUM

Tenderers may please note the following changes in 1. Tender No. 13245029 for Procurement of Design Supply Manufacture Erection Installation Commissioning and Prove Out including Laying of Foundation Civil Work of CNC Laser Profile Cutting Machine as per SPEC No. MECH/M&P/433/LASER PROFILE CUTTING MACHINE. REV.02, Due Date to be read as 06.05.2024 instead of 25.04.2024. **2.** Tender No. 13235423A for Procurement of Design, Manufacture, Erection, Supply, Installation and Commissioning of EOT Crane Cap-20 Ton as per Specification No. Mech/M&P/3800/03 Rev-04, Due Date to be read as 06.05.2024 instead of 25.04.2024. **3.** Tender No. 13245027B for Procurement of Electric Surface Traverser 80-T as per Specification No. Mech/P/Umbrella Project/436 Rev.-Nil, Due Date to be read as 07.05.2024 instead of 26.04.2024. **4.** Tender No. 17231585 for Procurement of Supply and Apply of Set of Roller Blind Arrangement for LHB First AC Coaches, Due Date to be read as 30.04.2024 instead of 23.04.2024. **5.** e-Adev Tender No. 07241034, Due Date to be read as 07.05.2024 instead of 22.04.2024. **6.** Tender No. 01241075 for Fully Assembled Improved Bogies Compatible with IR-LHB Coaches (+ 2 Items), Due Date to be read as 15.05.2024 instead of 25.04.2024. **All other terms & conditions will remain the same.** **PCMM**

R.O. No. 13-S/2024-25 **Dated 27.04.2024**

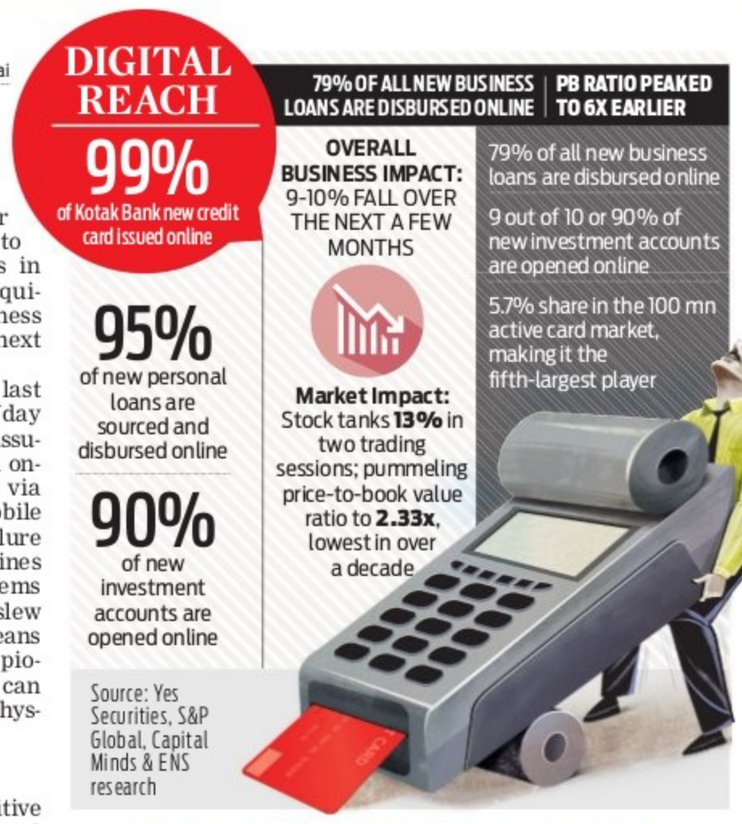
10% decline in net profit reported by IDFC FIRST Bank at ₹724 crore for the fourth quarter ending March 2024 due to substantial jump in provisions

KOTAK BANK IN REGULATORY CROSS HAIRS

BENN KOCHUVEEDAN @ Mumbai

THE regulatory crackdown on Kotak Mahindra Bank last week has left it gasping. By all accounts it will be an uphill task for the bulge bracket lender to recoup the heavy losses in terms of new customer acquisitions, incremental business and profitability within next one year.

The Reserve Bank had last Wednesday barred the Uday Kotak-founded bank from issuing fresh credit cards and onboarding new customers via its online channels and mobile apps for its continued failure to meet regulatory guidelines on risk management systems and infrastructure and a slew of other breaches. This means the bank that has been a pioneer in digital banking, can function only through its physical branches now.


DIGITAL REACH
99%
of Kotak Bank new credit card issued online
95%
of new personal loans are sourced and disbursed online
90%
of new investment accounts are opened online
79% OF ALL NEW BUSINESS LOANS ARE DISBURSED ONLINE
PB RATIO PEAKED TO 6X EARLIER
OVERALL BUSINESS IMPACT: 9-10% FALL OVER THE NEXT A FEW MONTHS
Market Impact: Stock tanks 13% in two trading sessions; pummeling price-to-book value ratio to 2.33x, lowest in over a decade
79% of all new business loans are disbursed online
9 out of 10 or 90% of new investment accounts are opened online
5.7% share in the 100 mn active card market, making it the fifth-largest player
Source: Yes Securities, S&P Global, Capital Minds & ENS research

Online Ahoy!

The magnitude of the punitive action is clear as over 90% of its operations have been done digital for years now.

"Kotak Bank sells as much as 99% of new credit cards online; 95% of new personal loans are sourced and disbursed online; 90% of new investment accounts are opened online; and 79% of new business loans are disbursed online," as per Yes Securities.

The bank used to be the bugle bracket lender in terms of profitability, margins, asset quality and premium valuation with the highest price-to-book value ratio of a high 6x, making its founder Kotak the richest banker in the whole of Asia for decades.

Hit on Growth & Profitability

As per S&P Global, the RBI action has nearly crippled the bank. "The RBI action could restrain Kotak's credit growth and profitability and it will take at least a year to recoup the losses and recover from the hit," S&P Global said in a note, adding the action could push the bank to rely more on physical branch network expansion to supplement growth.

"We anticipate Kotak could take a year to fully address the RBI's key concerns that encompasses IT systems stability, patch management, and disaster recovery," S&P has warned. The New York-based rater said credit cards will be the worst hit, as it has been a core focus area for the bank due to its higher-yielding nature, growing 52% YoY in the December 2023 quarter, followed by other assets like personal, consumer and small business loans 65%, of which are also sourced online.

As per PMS firm Capital Minds, the credit card segment accounting for nearly 3.7% of its overall advances, will be the most hit business segment. The next are personal, business, and consumer loans, which drive about 60% of its revenue digitally. As a result, one can expect 9–10% of the overall book to be impacted over the next few months.

Reason for RBI action

The punitive RBI action on the bank came in after several outages in its core banking systems, online and digital banking channels, apart from deficiencies identified via RBI's IT checks in 2022 and 2023.

On April 15, the RBI ordered the bank "to cease and desist, with immediate effect, from on-boarding new customers through its online and mobile banking channels as well as from issuing fresh credit cards. This has come after similar actions on a number of others in the lending/payments space. But this is the biggest punitive action on a large commercial bank. "These actions are necessitated based on major concerns arising out of the RBI's IT examination of the bank for the years 2022 and 2023 and the continued failure on its part to address these concerns in a comprehensive and timely manner, the RBI circular said.

RBI, however, said the bank shall continue to provide services to its existing customers, including credit card users.

Raising serious concerns over its IT infra and IT risk management framework, the regulator ordered it "to get a comprehensive external audit commissioned with the prior approval of the RBI". The actions on Kotak follow similar steps it has taken in recent months on others, like Paytm Payments Bank, IIFL Finance, JM Financial in recent months, Bank of Baroda last year and HDFC Bank in December 2020 when it was barred from sourcing new credit cards. While it took the agile and nimble HDFC Bank over 15 months to finally resolve the concerns raised by the RBI, Bank of Baroda and the NBFCs are yet resolve the issues.

In a statement, the bank said: "We have taken measures for adoption of new technologies to strengthen our IT systems and will continue to work with RBI to swiftly resolve other issues at the earliest."

Market impact of RBI ban

The market pummeled the Kotak Bank counter last Thursday and Friday. While on Thursday the stock tanked 11% at intra-day it lost nearly 15%, Friday the counter continued to bleed, losing 2.12% on the BSE to close ₹1,608.40. And this had founder Kotak, who has for long been the richest Asian banker, losing his wealth by over $1.3 billion on Thursday alone. Furthermore, and as many as 15 brokerages have a sell call on the stock now, while 24 still have buy call.

Run-in with the Mint Road

Founder Uday Kotak had many a run-ins with the regulator over 39-plus years as banker.

The trouble with RBI for Kotak, who began as bill discounting agent as a young man in the early 1980s and then moving onto stock broking and into NBFC and finally into commercial banking in November 1985, peaked in August 2018 when he tried to pare his stake to 20% as stipulated by RBI by issuing nonconvertible perpetual noncumulative preference shares.

RBI under Urjit Patel rejected the plan saying "it doesn't meet their promoter holding dilution requirement." This forced Kotak to drag the RBI to the Bombay HC. But later, the matter was settled out of court, wherein Kotak got more time to pare his stake. The regulatory glare had his five-year reappointment getting reduced to three years. But come September 2023 he suddenly announced exit from the bank, three months before the term to end. The tussle with the RBi again continued when it rejected all the insider names suggested by the management and chose to get an outsider in Ashok Vaswani to lead the bank in October 2023.

NEWSCOPE

THE PATANJALI CASE HAS OPENED A CAN OF WORMS

GURBIR SINGH

IT is indeed commendable the Supreme Court has decided to take Patanjali by the scruff of its neck. Baba Ramdev and Acharya Balakrishna would not have been so brazen had it not been for the tacit support of the state machinery. Having opened a can of worms, the Supreme Court now has also rightly expanded the scope of the case to other unethical FMCG advertising.

The Patanjali case is a frightening example of how money is to be made by peddling hocus pocus as remedies, and then using people's fears against modern medicine to promote products that have doubtful efficacy.

As far back as 2019, the company splashed advertising for eyedrops which it claimed was "helpful in treating glaucoma or cataract, double vision, color vision, retinitis pigmentosa and night blindness". Though in violation of the Drugs and Magic Remedies (Objectional Advertisements) Act (DMRA) 1954, no action was taken.

Between February and October 2022, the Uttarakhand State Licensing Authority (SLA) and Drug Controller of Indian were alerted to several Patanjali campaigns for drugs that claimed to cure diabetes, and bring down cholesterol levels. Most dangerous was the one forits drug 'Coronil' launched in February 2021 that claimed to arrest the covid-19 virus. How can any regulator take action, if the then Union Health Minister Harsh Vardhan flagged off the launch!

The court battle

The second leg of Baba Ramdev's ad campaign was against allopathic medicines. In a video that went viral,he said modern medicines hadkilled off lakhs of patients. Finally, the Indian Medical Association (IMA)filed a petition challenging Baba Ramdev and notice was issued in August 2022 by the Supreme Court.

So strong was Patanjali's clout that the Uttarakhand State Licensing Authority, under who the company's Haridwar production facilities fall, withdrew its ban on some of the drugs claiming it was an 'error'! The Ayush ministry too did a U-turn. It stated that no action could be taken as Rule 170 of the Drugs and Magic Remedies Act, which prohibits advertisements of Ayurvedic, Siddha or Unani drugs without the licensing authorities' approval, was awaiting a final decision of the court. This was a false claim as the operation of Rule 170 had not been stayed.

Patanjali, in violation of its undertaking, continued to issue the same offensive advertisements as late as January this year. It is at that point the Supreme Court on 27 February, this year issued a notice of contempt against Patanjali, threatened to fine the company Rs one crore and forced it to issue advertisements apologizing for violating its undertaking not to advertise these drugs.

To the credit of the Supreme Court bench of Justices Hima Kohli and A. Amanullah, it has decided to broaden the scope of its examination to other FMCG and health care companies. "Now we are looking at everything... we are looking at children, babies, women, and no one can be taken for a ride, and the Union government must wake up to this," the apex court said.

It's about time, too. Self-regulation by industry bodies such as the Advertising Standards Council of India (ASCI) have miserably failed. It was only years of controversy and litigation before Hindustan Unilever (HUL), producers of the brand 'Fair and Lovely', dropped the word 'fair' and replaced it with 'Glow and Lovely' in June 2020.

Besides the dubious claim the 'beauty' creamsmake the user 'fair', the advertising promotes racist stereotypes that 'fair' is beautiful, while dark skin tones are 'ugly'. What should have been disallowed by executive standards, had to be implemented through court intervention and a social media campaign.

The dark zone

There are hundreds of other advertisements that continue to make false health claims. From 'Mountain Dew' creating Supermen who dive off mountains, to 'energy' drinks such as Horlicks and Boost, the poor consumer is constantly under pressure to embrace expensive and dubious food and beverage supplements rather than rely on good, wholesome home food.

Then, beyond these celebrity products, there is a dark zone of clandestine advertising by a set of jiggery-pokery products that are advertised in regional and national newspapers. Theyare little better than con-jobs, and claim to banish impotency, grow scalp hair overnight, and keep sexual virility going for nights on end.

While our attention is on big brands like a Patanjali or Horlicks, the brand reach of some of these is in millions, and often larger than what our English-speaking middle-class identifies with. Sample some of the common ones: The 'Hempushpa' drug claims it keeps women 'active' for the whole month, while the 'Japani capsule', an old con-brand, claims it gives the user a "feeling of energy and elation". Yet again another brand 'Zulf Raj' says it stops hair loss, and prevents it from turning grey.

The ancient system of medicine in Ayurveda, Yunani and Siddha practice continues to contribute in a big way to our health system. However, quackery – as is present in allopathic medical practice – is a bane that has to be eliminated. The Ministry of Ayush was thus set up in November 2014 as a regulator of these ancient systems of medicine. Unfortunately, as we have seen, it has failed.

Ordinarily, media platforms should stop unethical advertising campaigns at the booking stage. However, given the delicate financials of media organisations, they have been turning a Nelson's eye to ad content. Here is where the ministry of Ayush, steps in. The teeth provided by Rule 170 of the DMR Act are strong enough ensure these ads don't appear.

Banning the products is a more complex process. But if the regulatory system ensures misleading and harmful advertising does not see the light of day, more than half the battle is won. There is no doubt the Patanjali case, when it reopens on 30 April or thereafter, will be keenly watched.

ICICI Bank profit up 17.4% to ₹10,707 cr

BENN KOCHUVEEDAN @ Mumbai

SECOND-largest private sector lender ICICI Bank on Saturday reported a net income of ₹10,707 crore for the March quarter, which is 17.4% more than what it had earned in the year-ago period, boosted by higher loan disbursals and lower provisions on healthy assets.

The key net interest income (NII) rose 8% to ₹19,093 crore year-on-year, while the net interest margin (NIM), which is the mark up a lender makes from the advances over the cost of funds, rose to 4.4% in the reporting quarter, down from 4.9% a year ago.

Executive director Sandeep Batra told reporters that the bank's gross non-performing assets (NPAs) improved to 2.16% from 2.81% in the same quarter last year, while net NPAs inched down to 0.42% from 0.48%, which led to the provisions more than halving to ₹718 crore in the quarter taking the provision coverage ratio on NPAs was 80.3.

The bank has written off gross NPAs amounting to ₹1,707 crore in the quarter. While fresh slippages grossed to ₹5,109 crore, of which as much as ₹4,900 crore came in from retail books (the management refused to give a breakup) the bank had a recovery of ₹3,918 crore, again most of which were from the retail book. The lender by market capitalisation of about ₹7.77 lakh crore, after the largest rival HDFC Bank with over 11.46 lakh crore, said its non-interest income, excluding the performance of the treasury, came in at ₹5,930 crore, a growth of 15.7% over the year-ago period.

Domestic advances grew 16.8% and the retail loan portfolio grew 19.4% and comprises 54.9% of the total loan portfolio. Including non-fund outstanding, the retail portfolio was 46.8% of the total portfolio, chief financial officer Anindya Banerjee said.

Yes Bank profit doubles to ₹452 cr

ENS ECONOMIC BUREAU @ Mumbai

YES BANK on Saturday reported over two-fold jump in standalone net profit at ₹452 crore for the quarter ending March 2024, primarily due to benefits on the provision front.

In the year-ago quarter, the bank logged a profit of ₹202.43 crore. The lender benefitted from write-back on income tax and interest on income tax returns, but profits were limited by its inability to comply with the mandatory priority sector lending (PSL) requirements, its management said. For FY24, it reported a 74% growth in net profit at ₹1,251 crore. InQ4FY24, core net interest income grew 2.3% to ₹2,153 crore on the back of narrowing of Net Interest Margin to 2.4% from 2.8% in the year-ago period.

Business & Beyond

Roche signs MoU with VinCense to augment access to Diabetes care

Chennai: Roche has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with VinCense, a digital health monitoring offering by MedIoTek Health Systems. Under terms of the agreement, the two companies aim to implement 3 programmes in Madurai district of Tamil Nadu (i) screening 100,000 individuals over next two years for diabetes, hypertension, obesity etc. (ii) intervention for uncontrolled diabetes mellitus management (iii) intervention for tuberculosis - diabetes mellitus co-morbidity management. The partnership will use integrated digital health solutions to drive early detection, intervention and care continuum in the state. As per the ICMR-INDIAB-17 study in 2023 by the Indian Council of Medical Research, prevalence of diabetes and other metabolic NCDs in India is a growing concern with most Indian states witnessing an increasing incidence.

Community health dispensary by AM/NS India inaugurated at Sankari Village

Keonjhar: ArcelorMittal Nippon Steel India (AM/NS India), a leading steel maker, has launched a community health dispensary under its flagship CSR project, Aarogya, at Sankari village in Keonjhar district.The health dispensary aims to cater to the needs of people of Sankari village and surrounding areas. Set up with the objective to address health and nutrition issues prevalent in the village and surrounding areas, enhance the overall well-being and promote a holistic approach for development of good health.

New circle head of PNB Balasore

Balasore: Biswojit Biswal appointed as new Circle Head of Punjab National Bank for Baleswar Circle. With an impressive career trajectory, he brings invaluable experience and fresh perspectives to his role. Starting as an agriculture officer in 2009, he has succeeded to become one of the youngest Circle Heads of PNB. Prior to this assignment, he was working as Circle Head of Aurangabad Circle. His journey spans across diverse regions of India, including Madhya Pradesh, West Bengal, and Bihar, where he gained skills and expertise. Embarking on his first assignment in Odisha, he brings a wealth of knowledge and strategic insight to the Circle, covering five major districts like Balasore, Bhadrak, Jajpur, Keonjhar & Mayurbhanj with 67 branches.

Earth Day: Vedanta accelerates renewables shift, deploys biomass for power generation

New Delhi: Vedanta Aluminium, India's largest producer of aluminium, is makingits fuel mix more sustainable with the deployment of biomass briquettes for power generation.The company is now utilizing 20 tonnes of biomass briquettes a day at its world-class alumina refinery in Lanjigarh, Odisha. This will help decrease the unit's greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by over 10,000 tonne of CO2 equivalent each year, in addition to reducing its reliance on fossil fuels. On the occasion of Earth Day 2024, this comes as a major step forward in its journey to achieve Net Zero Carbon by 2050 or sooner. The biomass briquettes are made from agricultural residue sourced from local farmers, who would otherwise simply burn it leading to severe environmental pollution. While fostering circular economy, Vedanta Aluminium is augmenting farmers' incomes in their areas of operations via this initiative by remunerating farmers for their crop stubble. A similar initiative has been rolled out previously at BALCO, India's iconic aluminium producer and a unit of Vedanta Aluminium based at Korba, Chhattisgarh.

HUDCO observed its 54th Foundation Day

To commemorate 54 years of dedicated service to the nation, the Housing & Urban Development Corporation (HUDCO) organised its Foundation Day on April 24, 2024, at India Habitat Centre, New Delhi. Sanjay Kulshrestha, CMD, HUDCO congratulated the employees "Our journey has been a long one, and this incredible journey of ours is a testimony of the vision, entrepreneurship spirit and commitment of our visionary heads of our esteemed organisation, along with the support of successive governments and our stakeholders." He said the efforts of HUDCO has been recognised by the government of India conferring a coveted "Navratna" status. He said "the dedication, expertise and commitment of our shared vision have been the driving force behind our achievements".

Duplantis sails to victory in Suzhou

Sweden's Armand 'Mondo' Duplantis dominated the men's pole vault at the Suzhou Diamond League meeting in China on Saturday, going close to bettering his own world record set last week. The reigning Olympic champion, who cleared 6.24 metres in Xiamen for his eighth world record mark, wrapped up the win in Suzhou with a meet record of 6.00 metres.

Treasure Island

As Vanuatu women make their mark in the ongoing T20 WC qualifiers, **Kalyani Mangale** takes a look at the journey of the players and how far they have come...

MELISSA Fare did not have it in her to stay up and watch the entire match as her Vanuatu teammates defeated Zimbabwe at the ICC T20 World Cup Qualifier in Abu Dhabi on Thursday. Having represented Vanuatu in 13 T20Is, Fare, who is currently studying in Adelaide, was on cloud nine when she woke up to the news of her side beating the full-member nation on their global qualifiers debut. "I woke up this morning, sat on my bed, and cried a little bit. I would have been a mess if I was watching it live," she told this daily. "I couldn't stop smiling. I was telling everyone about it today. I can imagine the emotions that were going on there with the team," she adds.

Women's cricket started in the island in 2012 and the team, which is mostly made up of players who are seasonal workers in Australia, has made it to the global WC qualifiers in itself is the biggest achievement for them. "What people fail to realise is that the Vanuatu women's team is very young. 2012 is not too long ago. It's just only 12 years of the team being together."

Fare remembers what the situation was over the years, where like every amateur team, Vanuatu spent most of the time training rather than actually playing the game. For many such teams, the time between two games could be weeks or months. Vanuatu women used to wait for two years, just to participate in one regional tournament. This situation changed in the East Asia and Pacific regional qualifiers, where hosts Vanuatu won all six matches, including the one against Papua New Guinea, one of the strongest teams in the region. Vanuatu were not the runaway favourites to win the regional qualifiers, but their undefeated run made sure they were knocking on another opportunity, this time at the global level. "It took some time for the girls to realize what was happening when we won the EAP qualifier to make it to the global qualifier," Fare remembers.

That win changed the way people looked at women's cricket in the island. The game found new voices and column inches in the local newspapers. "Starting from last year, the EAP qualifiers, I have never seen the women's team being put so much on the back page of the newspaper. Today as well, there are so many social media posts and so much support for the team. People who have never watched cricket in their lives feel the pride that the girls showed on the field. Now, what this means for cricket is that people are now paying more attention to cricket as a sport."

In all the attention and fanfare that has come along from all over the world, there is one person who Fare believes is at the core of this team. Their captain Selina Solman, who has been there since day 1. "If you look at the team, Lizzing Enoch, was part of a program that Selena started. We did a cyclone relief drive where we put this idea to run a women's tournament in Vanuatu on Espiritu Santo, the largest island in Vanuatu. So we took the entire national women's team there. It was COVID. We couldn't go anywhere else and Lizzing was identified from there. I think a lot of the girls that are in that circle have been able to stay in cricket because of the commitment and the passion that Selena has for the team," Fare said.

Sunday Special

Our national sport is football, but now people are paying a lot more attention to cricket and that is because of the women's team is inspiring

Melissa Fare, Vanuatu player

Along with Solman and Andrews, there is 28-year-old Nasimana Navaika in the team, who took four wickets against Zimbabwe. "She is like the glue that keeps it all together. She's quiet, but her presence is known in the field. Nasimana played football before she went into cricket. She had to take a break from cricket because she had a little boy and she's come back to cricket and she's still got it." However, Fare has a soft corner for 17-year-old Vanessa Vira, whom she has seen play cricket since she was just a kid. "Vanessa started playing cricket with me when she was eight years old. The uniforms didn't fit her. We used to put the uniform on her, it looked like a dress, but she has always been very talented. She would go out there a little bit nervous but the big girls would be like we don't want to bowl fast and then you bowl to her and she would just play it beautifully," Fare reminisces.

From the most experienced player in the team to the youngest one, their passion has kept them fighting to play the game they love the most. That passion and vision from someone like Tim Cutler, CEO of Vanuatu Cricket, and Rodney Prestia, CEO of I Comply Labour and Agricultural Compliance, has helped these players to stay in the game. Under their work contract now, the players can work in Australia for nine months picking fruits, where the company has provided the nets and other facilities to practice. "Getting any employment is hard considering that a lot of girls who play have not gone through the whole system of high school. It's difficult for them to get jobs and be women as well. They are expected to stay at home. But their passion is cricket. Having the opportunity to continue to play cricket is something that is not possible in Vanuatu. They are able to practice in Australia where there are good facilities and good competition is working well for them. They are managing it well because they have a good contract with the company that they're working for."

It wasn't just a win that gave Vanuatu two points in the World Cup qualifier. It was much more than that. It was a validation for all the work the likes of Solman and Andrew have put in. It was an incentive for the likes of Vira to stay in the game. It was a chance for someone like Navaika to showcase what she can do at the next level. And they have all done it with flying colours. However, this is not the end.

To quote Fare, "This is the beginning of what Vanuatu can achieve as a cricket team."

Battle between Hyderabad batters and Chennai spinners

ASHOK VENUGOPAL @ Chennai

FOCUS ON THE LEFT: CSK's Ravindra Jadeja (L) and SRH's Abhishek Sharma (R) during a practice session at the MA Chidambaram Stadium on Saturday | ASHWIN PRASATH

WITH the Indian Premier League (IPL) heading towards the business end of the league phase, teams have been trying to bat out the opposition. When CSK locks horns with Sunrisers Hyderabad at Chepauk on Sunday, both teams' thinktank will be trying to figure out what will be a safe total at the MA Chidambaram stadium. However, the surface may be on the slower side as it will be a used strip.

After facing consecutive defeats at the hands of Lucknow Super Giants, the holders will be keen to get back to winning ways.

CSK began their campaign on a winning note under new captain Ruturaj Gaikwad, but a couple of defeats have seen them slide down the rankings. They are tied on eight points with Gujarat Titans but depending on the latter's encounter against Bengaluru earlier on Sunday, they may begin in seventh.

On the other hand, SRH remain in the top-half, despite their loss to Bengaluru in their previous encounter.

Many former players believe that spinners can contain the strong SRH top-order. They cite the example of Sunil Narine who conceded only 24 runs in his quota of 4 overs against a rampaging Punjab. For CSK, Ravindra Jadeja will be the key for them to restrict Hyderabad to a gettable score.

''Well, I'm sure it doesn't matter what day it is. He's (Jadeja) always a key player for us. He's obviously one of our best players. He plays a very important role with bat, ball and fielding. I mean, that's why he's been so great for us for a long period of time, because he can contribute with ball, bat and in the field. So it makes him almost three players in one. So yes, of course he's going to be very important on Sunday," opined Hussey.

SRH's coach, Muttiah Muralitharan, too believes that the IPL this season has changed with batters calling the shots. But he admits that an experienced spinner can come in handy and restrict the run flow.

''Yeah, Sunday's match is going to be a high scoring game. Because the thing is the game has changed a little bit from last year to this year, because scores over 200 have been chased. And also teams have been putting up big scores,

maybe the impact players, their coaches and players are using it very well. They had one or two years to know how to use the impact player rule and now they are using. So it is going to be a high scoring game and it is not going to be a low scoring one. I haven't seen the wicket. If the wicket is dry and it has chance for spin, then it will be a different ball game," said Muralitharan.

Jake, Stubbs six-hitting takes Delhi to 5th place

EXPRES NEW SERVICE @ Chennai

Jake Fraser-McGurk hit 84 off 27 balls on Saturday against Mumbai | AP

JAKE Fraser-McGurk's fifty upfront and Tristan Stubbs' late onslaught helped Delhi Capitals beat Mumbai Indians by ten runs on Sunday. With the win, Capitals moved to fifth place on the points table.

Chasing 258, Mumbai did not have the easiest of starts. Though Rohit Sharma and Ishan Kishan picked up some early boundaries, the counterattack did not last long. First, Rohit fell trying to take on Khaleel Ahmed. Ishan fell shortly after to Mukesh for a 14-ball 20. Meanwhile, Suryakumar Yadav kept the chase going with consecutive boundaries off Mukesh. He also hit a six and a four off Khaleel, but got out in the same over as MI finished the powerplay with 65/3.

Kuldeep Yadav and Axar Patel kept it tight for a couple of overs, but Hardik Pandya smashed the wrist spinner for three fours and a six while Tilak Varma took on Axar with consecutive boundaries. Coming in as an impact sub, Rasikh Salam delivered a boundary-less over, but that did not help much as Hardik smashed Mukesh over deep midwicket. Salam dismissed Hardik, but Tilak and Tim David kept the chase going. Varma raced to a 25-ball fifty. Despite the two sixes in the 19th over, Salam kept his nerves and delivered a ten-run victory. He finished with 3/34 in his four overs.

Earlier, opting to bowl first, Mumbai were in for a ride, courtesy Fraser-McGurk. The 22-year-old started hitting from the word go and did not spare anyone. Not even Jasprit Bumrah. When Hardik Pandya brought himself on, Jake slapped him over covers. Despite Bumrah's quiet sixth over, there was no respite for the bowlers as the Australian looked set for a big hundred. However, he didn't time the pull against Chawla and fell for 84 from 27 balls. Tristan Stubbs, with a 25-ball 48, taking Capitals to 257/4 in 20 overs.

Brief scores: DC 257/4 in 20 ovs (Jake 84, Hope 41, Stubbs 48 n.o) bt MI 247/9 in 20 ovs (Varma 63; Salam 3/34).

Super Sunday

Gujarat Titans seek to get out of a slump against Royal Challengers Bengaluru while Chennai Super Kings take on a power-packed Sunrisers in the evening. A look...

CAN RCB CONTINUE WINNING RUN?

With the need to win all their remaining games, Bengaluru cannot put a foot wrong against Titans. Meanwhile, the Shubman Gill led-side would be looking for a quick turnaround as another loss could see them lose ground.

SUNRISERS FACE SPIN CHALLENGE

With the surface being a used one, expect the pitch for CSK vs SRH to be on the slower side. And therein lies the challenge for Hyderabad. Whether they will be able to continue the onslaught at Chepauk is yet to be seen.

Focus on CSK top-order

At a time when most teams are going berserk in the powerplay, CSK have stuck to their regular template. However, it has not worked for them so far. Will they change it according to the opponent? How will they take on SRH in the powerplay? These questions could hold key.

Gujarat Titans **vs** Royal Challengers Bengaluru, Ahmedabad, 3.30 PM

Chennai Super Kings **vs** Sunrisers Hyderabad, Chennai, 7.30 PM

Live on Star Sports and JioCinema

Can India get off to winning start?

With the white-ball series against Bangladesh women beginning on Sunday, a look at the first T20I...

WC PREP BEGINS

With few months to go for the T20 World Cup, which also will be held in Bangladesh, this could be a perfect precursor for India women to asses the conditions, team combination and what kind of players they want in the playing XI from here on. They still have a few more series before the global event, but from now on every match counts.

EYES ON SAJANA, ASHA

While Sajana S and Asha Joy are rewarded for their WPL performances, there is a larger picture. India do not have another leg spinner and Sajana, apart from bowling off-spin, is an excellent hitter of spin — something that could come in handy on the slow pitches. Having toiled for more than a decade to get here, the 29-year-old and 33-year-old will be looking to make the most of the chance in their maiden call-up.

INTENSE CONTEST AWAITS

The last time India toured Bangladesh in 2023, it was a spicy contest where India won the T20Is 2-1 and drew the ODI series 1-1. Expect nothing less this time around as the Nigar Sultana led side are on the rise and can beat any time on a given day.

Bangladesh vs India, 1st T20I
Live on FanCode, 3.30PM

Liverpool's Mo Salah (R) and manager Jurgen Klopp were involved in a touchline spat during the team's 2-2 draw with West Ham on Saturday | AFP

Liverpool title hopes ebb away after draw

AGENCIES @ London

Jurgen Klopp said he was "not in the mood" to discuss Liverpool's Premier League title chances after a 2-2 draw at West Ham on Saturday effectively snuffed out their hopes.

Just weeks ago Liverpool were on course for a quadruple of trophies but Klopp's final season at Anfield is fizzling out.

The latest blow came at the London Stadium, where the visitors realistically had to win to have any chance of staying in the hunt alongside Arsenal and Manchester City. The single point leaves Liverpool third in the table on 75 points, one behind defending champions City.

Results: Newcastle 5-1 Sheffield; Fulham 1-1 Palace; Man United 1-1 Burnley; Wolves 2-1 Luton; West Ham 2-2 Liverpool.

Girona close in on CL

LAS PALMAS: Girona took another stride towards Champions League football next season with a 2-0 win at Las Palmas on Saturday in La Liga. David Lopez and Artem Dovbyk's goals helped Girona.

BADMINTON

Ashmita stuns Michelle, India beat Canada

AGENCIES @ Chengdu (China)

ASHMITA Chaliha produced an inspired show to stun higher-ranked Michelle Li as the Indian women's team notched up a clinical 4-1 win over Canada to make a positive start in the Uber Cup tournament here on Saturday.

Chaliha, ranked 53rd, showed great mental resolve and tenacity as she outwitted World No 25 Li 26-24, 24-22 in a 42-minute opening singles clash.

Chaliha, who was part of India's maiden Asia Team Championships win in February, took over the leadership role in the absence of the top guns including PV Sindhu and delivered against Li, who is on a comeback trail after undergoing surgery for a meniscus tear last August. Doubles pair of Priya Konjengbam and Shruti Mishra then beat Catherine Choi and Jeslyn Chow 21-12, 21-10 to put India 2-0 ahead. Meanwhile, the men's team started off their Thomas Cup campaign with a 4-1 win over Thailand. India lost the first tie, but fought back to win.

Skipper Samson leads the way for RR

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Chennai

Sanju Samson and Dhruv Jurel | AP

SANJU SAMSON (71 n.o) and Dhruv Jurel (52 n.o) hit half-centuries to help Rajasthan Royals beat Lucknow Super Giants by seven wickets to stay on the top of the table with 16 points. Chasing 197, RR lost a few wickets, but Samson, once joined by Jurel, had no trouble in keeping the chase going. Together, they added 121 runs in 62 balls to take RR home.

Earlier, Lucknow were hit by twin blows inside the first two overs as Quinton de Kock and Marcus Stoinis, the hero of the last match against Chennai, were done by the slight movement that was on offer for the pacers. After Trent Boult accounted for the former, Sandeep Sharma dismissed the latter. After that Rahul adopted a wait and watch approach while Deepak Hooda assumed the role of aggressor. What helped Rahul get his innings moving was an expensive Avesh Khan. He was 25 off 21 before the seventh over began. He finished with a 48-ball 76. Unfortunately, Nicholas Pooran couldn't kick on and innings struggled for oxygen once Rahul departed for 76. **Brief scores:** LSG 196/5 in 20 ovs (Rahul 76, Hooda 50; Sandeep 2/31) lost to RR 199/3 in 19 ovs (Samson 71 n.o, Jurel 52 n.o).

EXPRESS READ

OST T2: Arjun, Esha among toppers

NEW DELHI: Arjun Singh Cheema, Esha Singh, Divyansh Singh Panwar and Elavenil Valarivan won their events on the concluding day of the Olympic Selection Trials (OST) 1 and 2 in rifle/pistol. Cheema won the day's first final (men's 10m air pistol in OST T2), followed by Esha in women's 10m air pistol in OST T2. Divyansh claimed the men's 10m air rifle and Elavenil clinched women's 10m air rifle final.

Asian boxing: Aryan, Jitesh advance

ASTANA (KAZAKHSTAN): Aryan (51kg) and Jitesh (54kg) won their respective contests to ensure a winning start for India on the opening day of the ASBC Asian U-22 & Youth Boxing Championships here on Saturday. Aryan defeated South Kora's Jo Hyeon Woo and Jitesh got the better of Chen Yu Chen from Chinese Taipei, to emerge winners by identical margins of 5-0.

Jyothi shoots hat-trick of gold in WC

SHANGHAI: Asian Games champion Jyothi Surekha Vennam spearheaded India's dominance with a rare hat-trick of gold as compound archers lapped up five medals at the ongoing Archery World Cup Stage 1 here on Saturday. Jyothi fought past top seed Andrea Becerra of Mexico in a tight shoot-off finish 146-146 (9*-9) to become the second Indian after Deepika Kumari to secure triple gold medals.

Madrid Open: Tsitsipas out in Rd 2

MADRID: Stefanos Tsitsipas suffered a surprise second round exit at the hands of World No 118 Thiago Monteiro in Madrid on Saturday, while Iga Swiatek cruised into the last 16 on a rainy day at the Caja Magica. Tsitsipa lost 6-4, 6-4 to the Brazilian qualifier. Over on Manolo Santana stadium, last year's women's finalist Swiatek eased past Romanian Sorana Cirstea 6-1, 6-1.

PATRIOT COSTS A BOMB

One Patriot missile battery system costs over $1 billion, with $400 million for the system and $690 million for the missiles in a battery, according to Washington-based think tank Center for Strategic and International Studies

CREATING CREDIBLE

MISSILE DEFENCE SHIELD

T K VINEETH @ Kochi

ON April 13, Iran launched around 320 drones and missiles towards Israel in retaliation for the latter's deadly April 1 strike on the Iranian embassy in Damascus, the Syrian capital. Israel, with the help of allies including the US and the UK, managed to intercept and destroy 99% of the missiles and drones outside Israeli airspace but a few reached and exploded in its territory, causing minor damage to a military site. Israel returned the favour on April 19, hitting Iran's Isfahan province with a salvo of drones and a missile. While Tehran played down the hit and ruled out further retaliatory action, Israel is said to have taken out the Russian-made S-300 anti-ballistic missile defence system stationed at the Isfahan International Airport.

Two major reasons are cited for Iran's unprecedented decision to engage Israel head-on. One, domestic compulsion to be seen as responding to Israel's direct attack on its mission in Damascus, which killed a top military commander and his deputy. Without a proportional response, the Iranian leadership would be accused of being weak. The second is more strategic. That the Israel-bound drones and missiles would be shot down was a foregone conclusion, but Iran launched them anyway. Because the larger objective was to bleed Israel's economy, not kill people or inflict physical damage to Israeli assets.

Missile defence is a highly complex and extremely costly affair. Iran had given fair warning before launching a swarm of drones and missiles, which gave Israel and its allies enough time to plan their interception. But in such situations, the cost is many times more for the defender than the attacker because the missiles to destroy the drones are obscenely expensive. According to a *Wall Street Journal* report, the single night's operation cost Tel Aviv $550 million, while some Israeli media outlets pegged the cost even higher at over $1 billion.

Israel's air defence shield

Israel is known to have one of the world's best anti-missile systems. Its famous Iron Dome is just one of the several air defence shields in its arsenal. Iron Dome is a network of interceptor batteries that utilise radars to detect incoming short-range rockets, artillery shells and mortars out of the sky. Each battery is equipped with three to four launchers, 20 Tamir interceptor missiles and a radar system. When a rocket is detected by the radar, the Iron Dome system's advanced software predicts the rocket's trajectory and assesses whether it poses a threat to populated areas or infrastructure. If there is threat, interceptor missiles are fired to blow the rocket out of the sky. The Tamir interceptor missiles can knock down incoming threats launched from ranges of 4-70 km. Costing around $80,000 apiece, the interceptors are only used when there is a threat to human life or infrastructure. The system is not configured to fire on rockets outside of a protected area; those are ignored and left to land harmlessly elsewhere.

In appearance, Iron Dome is a series of truck-towed mobile units placed strategically throughout the small country. The all-weather system reacts in a matter of seconds and is manned 24x7. Israel is known to have at least 10 such systems stationed at different locations. These can also be moved quickly to effectively deal with threats. Iron Dome is at the bottom of the defence shield and primarily deals with threats from close range areas such as Gaza.

David's Sling is the next layer. Developed along with the US, it intercepts medium-range missiles within 40-300 km, such as those with Hezbollah in Lebanon. The cost of one David Sling is pegged at $1 million.

To intercept long-range missiles, Israel has the Arrow-2 and Arrow-3 systems. The Arrow missiles, which operate outside the atmosphere, are the costliest, at $2 million to $3.5 million apiece.

According to Washington-based think tank Center for Strategic and International Studies, the Arrow 2 is designed to destroy ballistic missiles in their terminal phase in the upper atmosphere. It has a range of 90 km and a maximum altitude of 51 km. The Arrow 2 is said to be as an upgrade of the US Patriot missile defence system. It is intended to tackle long-range ballistic missiles like the Iranian Shahab that actually leave and re-enter the atmosphere.

Its upgraded version, Arrow 3, has a much wider range of 2,400 km. It employs hit-to-kill technology once the target is identified and is designed for exo-atmospheric interception of ballistic missiles – that is, it intercepts the missile in space before it re-enters the atmosphere. According to the Israeli Space Agency, it can double up as an anti-satellite defence weapon, making Israel one of the few countries that can shoot down satellites.

India's preparedness

Unlike Israel, India has a large territory to protect which makes the air defence options costlier and complex. India has an array of air defence shields to protect the country from external attacks. From indigenously developed very short-range air defence system (VSHORADS) and shoulder-firing MANPADS (man-portable air-defence systems) to sophisticated anti-ballistic missile systems, the defence forces have a multi-layered deterrence systems in place.

India has a two-tiered ballistic defence system to take on all threats, including nuclear warheads. Broadly, missile interceptors under the Prithvi Air Defence (PAD) programme are meant for high-altitude (exo-atmospheric) threats and Ashwin Advanced Air Defence (AAD) deal with low-altitude (endo-atmospheric) challenges. The Swordfish and Super Swordfish long-range tracking radars, which use Israeli technology and can spot very small objects to the size of a cricket ball, guide these interceptor missiles. While no official information is available, these radars are reportedly installed in Rajasthan, Uttarakhand and Madhya Pradesh.

A major boost to the defence shield is provided by the S-400, which is a mobile, surface-to-air missile system designed by Russia. The interceptor missile system can destroy incoming hostile aircraft, missiles, and drones at ranges of up to 400 km. The system can simultaneously engage 36 targets, making it one of the strongest weapons in India's defence arsenal. According to reports, India has deployed three S-400s at strategic border locations to counter threats from China and Pakistan. Two more S-400s are expected from Russia soon. The S-400's capabilities are roughly comparable to the US Patriot system and are reportedly twice as cheap. However, US fifth-generation fighter jets, such as the F-35 and its variants, may escape S-400's radar as they have been designed with the S-400's capabilities in mind, though F-16s and F/A-18E/F Super Hornet may fall into the system's net.

Then there is the surface-to-air Python 5 and Derby air defence missile system (SPYDER) developed by Rafael Advanced Defense Systems of Israel. It has a range of 40 km, an intercept altitude of 12 km, and can engage up to four targets simultaneously.

Among the Russian made machines are Igla-S MANPADS, Pechora, and OSA-AK. Igla-S is a hand-held system that can be fired by an individual or crew to bring down an enemy aircraft. Pechora is a surface-to-air anti-aircraft short-range missile system designed for destruction of aircraft, cruise missiles, assault helicopters and other air targets at ground, low and medium altitudes. OSA-AK is a highly mobile, low-altitude, surface-to-air missile system with a range of 10 km.

However, these older weapons are said to be ineffective against slow-moving drones because the radar is designed to detect bigger, fast-moving objects. The drones are spotted only when they come too close but then it will be too late to fire.

On the indigenous front, India already has Akash and Samar systems for short-range air defence. The Akash air defence missile systems have an interception range of 25 km. Akash is a medium-range mobile surface-to-air missile system developed by the Defence Research and Development Organisation and produced by Bharat Dynamics. The Samar (surface to air missile for assured retaliation) developed in-house by the Indian Air Force can intercept low-flying targets such as drones and attack helicopters, up to a range of 12 km at a maximum speed of Mach 2.5.

The Barak-8 medium range surface-to-air missile, jointly developed with Israel, has a range of 70 km and is capable of neutralising missiles, aircraft, helicopters and guided bombs. For long-range defence, a homegrown air defence shield is in the works with an expected operational range is 350 km.

Russia is India's major weapons supplier. However, deliveries have been delayed due to the Ukraine war. India is now focusing on developing its own air defence systems under Project Kusha to deal with modern threats. Spearheaded by DRDO in collaboration with the public and private sector firms, the ₹21,000-crore project will have a comprehensive array of systems to protect the country. Apart from the S-400 squadrons, it will have domestically developed systems that are expected to be commissioned by 2028-2029.

US deterrence

The US operates on a global scale and its deterrence capabilities are believed to be the strongest in the world. Its anti-aircraft and anti-missile systems are stationed strategically in many parts of the world. It has a vast network of radars across the globe.

The Patriot, which stands for Phased Array Tracking Radar for Intercept on Target, is the primary air and missile defense system of the US. Initially designed as an anti-aircraft system, the newer variants of the Patriot are capable of engaging ballistic and cruise missiles, loitering munitions and aircraft. A typical Patriot battery includes a radar set, engagement control station, power generation and other support vehicles, and several launch stations. A Patriot missile battery requires about 90 soldiers to operate.

The system was first used in combat during the 1991 Gulf War, with batteries protecting Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and Israel, and later during the US invasion of Iraq in 2003. It is a theater-wide surface-to-air missile defense system built by Raytheon and considered one of the most advanced air defense systems in the US arsenal. It is in service with the US and allied countries, including Israel, Germany, Greece, Japan, Kuwait, the Netherlands, Saudi Arabia, South Korea, Poland, Sweden, Qatar, the United Arab Emirates, Romania, Spain, and Taiwan.

The Patriot missile defense system consists of six major components — missile, launcher, radar set, control station, power generator unit and high-frequency antenna mast. With continuous upgrades, the latest Patriot system bears little resemblance to the original system deployed in 1983.

Patriot currently supports two interceptor families: the Patriot Advanced Capability-Two (PAC-2) and the PAC-3. The PAC-2 missile family is a successor to the original Patriot and PAC-1 interceptors, featuring software updates to engage ballistic missiles and an upgraded blast-fragmentation warhead. The PAC-3 missile is smaller in diameter and uses hit-to-kill technology, rather than a blast-fragmentation warhead.

DAMNED IF YOU DO, DAMNED IF YOU DON'T

All major countries, including India, have sophisticated, multi-layered defence systems to thwart attacks from enemy countries. But the decision to fire interceptor missiles is usually taken at a very high level as it will have serious implications. Net assessment is extremely critical because from a broad strategic point of view, expending these weapons weakens the military readiness unless the stockpile is replenished fast. In either case, it costs a bomb. Literally.

MAYANK SINGH @ New Delhi

INDIA'S defence exports are on a roll, climbing the ₹21,000 crore peak in 2023-24. The Ministry of Defence in its statement on April 1 said, "Defence exports have touched a record ₹21,083 crore (approx. $2.63 billion) in the Financial Year (FY) 2023-24, a growth of 32.5% over the last fiscal when the figure was ₹15,920 crore. The recent figures indicate that the defence exports have grown by 31 times in the last 10 years as compared to FY 2013-14."

The ministry attributed the impetus to the joint effort of the private sector and Defence Public Sector Undertakings (DPSUs). While the private sector's contribution to the export basket is 60%, the share of the DPSUs is 40%. Parallelly, defence export authorisations went up from 1,414 in FY23 to 1,507 in FY24. Though the country doesn't figure as a big seller in the global arms bazaar yet, the spurt in exports not just lubricates the military-industrial complex and brings in foreign exchange but adds muscle to the sector that is ready to take a bigger leap. That confidence stems from the Indian defence products and technologies gaining global acceptance.

The biggest executed contract, as first reported by this newspaper, was the initial delivery of three Brahmos missile batteries to The Philippines on April 18. It is a $374.96 million (₹2,700 crore) contract for a shore-based anti-ship missile system from India.

If one were to compare the last two decades, the volume of defence exports has grown by as much as 21 times. "Total defence exports during 2004-05 to 2013-14 were ₹4,312 crore, which has gone up to ₹88,319 crore in the period from 2014-15 to 2023-24," the ministry said. It attributed the jump to policy reforms and the ease of doing business initiatives, in addition to the end-to-end digital solutions provided to the domestic industries for promoting defence exports. In FY23, the country's defence production crossed the ₹1 lakh crore mark for the first time as it reached ₹1,06,800 crore, a rise of more than 12% over FY22, when the figure was ₹95,000 crore.

Private sector

The DPSUs and the private sector now export a wide range of platforms, including aircraft, like the Dornier-228, artillery guns, Brahmos missiles, PINAKA rockets and launchers, radars, simulators and armoured vehicles. Officials say there is a rising interest in indigenous products such as the Light Combat Aircraft Tejas, Light Combat Helicopters and aircraft carriers. Besides, Indian skills at maintenance, repair and overhaul (MRO) are drawing international suitors.

About 50 Indian companies in the private sector have contributed to defence exports. Some of their major destinations are Italy, Maldives, Sri Lanka, Russia, France, Nepal, Mauritius, Sri Lanka, Israel, Egypt, UAE, Bhutan, Ethiopia, Saudi Arabia, Philippines, Poland, Spain and Chile. Major defence items that are being exported include personal protective items, Offshore Patrol Vessels, Advanced Light Helicopter, Sukhoi Avionics, communication equipment, Coastal Surveillance Systems, Kavach MoD II Launcher and Fire Control System (decoy system with built-in intelligence to counter the threat of anti-ship missiles), spares for radars, electronic systems and light engineering mechanical parts.

BIGGEST GLOBAL IMPORTER

1. India remained the biggest global importer of arms at 9.8% in 2019-23, up from 9.1% in the 2014-18 period, according to SIPRI. As much as 36% of the imports came from Russia followed by France at 33% and the US at 13%
2. India's share of Russian arms imports shrunk from 76% in 2009-13 to 58% in 2014-18 and 36% in 2019-23
3. The five largest arms importers in 2019-23 were India, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Ukraine and Pakistan
4. Arms imports by Pakistan grew by 43% between 2014-18 and 2019-23 and accounted for 4.3% of the world total, making it the fifth largest arms importer globally. 82% of its arms procurement came from China in 2019-23, as against 69% in 2014-18 and 51% in 2009-13

R&D constraints

Research and development (R&D) in the defence sector is an imperative for higher self-reliance and indigenisation. Since defence technology needs long-term investment, its obsolescence is high with low economies of scale. Any policy on maximising indigenous production without a well-supported R&D policy and export strategy would be flawed. Therefore, the defence industrial policy has to be supplemented by the strategy for defence exports without which the economic base of the defence industry would be difficult to sustain.

Yet, a Parliamentary Standing Committee on Defence in 2023-24 recorded a worrying trend of decline in DRDO (Defence Research and Development Organisation) spend as a percentage of defence expenditure. Defence R&D expenditure was 6.59% in the 2010-11, which fell to 5.79% in 2011-12, 5.39% in 2012-13 and 5.34% in 2013-14. R&D share as a percentage of defence expenditure slightly improved to 6.6% in 2014-15 but dipped to 5.89% during 2015-16. In 2019-20, the percentage climbed to 6.23% but subsequently witnessed a free fall. In 2021-22, 2022-23 and 2023-24, it was 5.89%, 5.53% and 5.38%, respectively.

The standing committee was informed by the ministry in December last year that the overall R&D budget is ₹5,000 crore, out of which about 25% or around ₹1,300 crore is earmarked for the private sector. Hence, the squeeze on DRDO funds. The committee observed that R&D is a prerequisite for a robust and modern defence mechanism, adding the government must fund in-house projects of DRDO along with outsourcing defence R&D.

Cost of arms import

An independent defence industrial base is an index of strategic autonomy at the international stage. It also helps avert possible coercion by supplier states. India has remained a top arms importer for years. While the country was importing arms and equipment from Russia for decades, it is now sourcing its requirements from various countries, including Israel, France and the US. India became the biggest arms importer in 2007 and has largely maintained this position since 2009.

Gen Bipin Rawat's policy push

A clear enunciation of the need for Make in India came from the late Chief of Defence Staff Gen Bipin Rawat who in 2017 articulated that the "Indian armed forces must fight the next war with indigenous solutions," while addressing a seminar. He promoted the DPSUs while not ignoring their shortcomings. Among the biggest problems with DPSUs is their inefficient production line. As such, most domestic weapons programmes, except a few, have overshot their timelines resulting in cost overruns. It forces the country to spend heavily on imports despite a domestic defence industrial base that is yet to fully realise its potential.

Production policy

The government announced a Defence Production Policy in 2011 to achieve substantive self-reliance in design, development and production of equipment/weapons systems/platforms required for defence in as early a time frame as possible; to create conditions conducive for the private industry to take an active role in this endeavour; and to enhance potential of SMEs in indigenisation to broaden the defence R&D base of the country.

While the policy lays emphasis on indigenous production with greater role of the private sector, small and medium enterprises and R&D institutions, its objective cannot be met without a robust export strategy, so as to assure the industry of access to international markets in addition to the domestic market for investing in the sector.

Beginning of Make in India

It was in September 2014 that the Make in India policy was launched to incentivise the sunrise sector to become a manufacturing and production hub. As part of the scheme, the defence sector was identified as an important focus area to make the country self-reliant in arming its military. In conjunction came the plan to also export to friendly foreign countries. Another initiative was the release of five Positive Indigenisation lists by the defence ministry, which categorically ban the import of arms, equipment and systems with staggered timelines.

Role of diplomacy

Defence exports have become a significant component of diplomacy between friendly countries. The exported arms and equipment contribute towards building local operational capabilities, which further enhances interoperability with the forces. Visiting dignitaries bring business delegations along, including those linked to defence manufacturing. India is doing likewise. It has directed its defence attaches posted abroad to scan markets in the host countries for possible export of defence equipment. All this leads to further building of bilateral trust with the importing country. Indian embassies/missions abroad are playing a positive role in promoting the export of defence products.

As exclusively reported by this newspaper in September 2023, the government took the decision to post more Defence Attaches in Africa to enhance ties. It includes posting officers from all three services. The ministry's Department of Military Affairs and the Department of Defence made efforts in 2023 to post Defence/Military Attaches to countries where they can play a role in understanding the requirements and help with defence exports from both public and private sectors. It's work in progress.

INDIAN DEFENCE EXPORTS COMING OF AGE